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THE MOUNT. BY C. F. KEARY.

IN ONE VOLUME.

THE MOUNT

BY

C. F. KEARY

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1911.

THE MOUNT.

CHAPTER I.

FIFTY years ago Hartlebury-on-Dane in East Staffordshire was a quiet country town, with no special industry of its own except the Hartlebury Brewery, which at the time our story opens still existed. In the earlier days this was generally known as Nettlethorpe's Brewery. Hartlebury was therefore behind some of the great industrial centres of the county: behind the Potteries, for instance, which lay some two leagues to the west. For of the Potteries, the founders, and, as one may say, patron saints, Wedgwood and Spode, had their birth as far back as the eighteenth century. And one of the great Josiah Wedgwood's achievements was the making spittoons with the effigy of the younger Pitt, and this simple inscription—"On Billy Pitt we will spit." 'Twas not so classical a work as the copy of the celebrated "Portland Vase." But it is so far off us to-day that it seems classical. The iron-works of South Staffordshire again—chain-works, nail-works, and the rest—these date back to quite the earlier years of the last century. But Hartlebury has done a good deal to make up for lost time, and it is not dis-

tinguishable to-day from any other industrial town in the Midlands, unless it be that a few names, such as the Cornmarket and the old London Road, suggest rusticities that have passed. The district has been found rich in coal. What were wooded heights overlooking the town are now pit mouths, from which the fires of smelting furnaces rise and fall, or heaps of half-live tinders smoke and smoulder. Quiet hamlets have become mining and workmen's villages, and have, many of them, stretched forth tentacles to catch hold of one another; and Hartlebury has put forth other tentacles to unite them with itself, feelers of black and muddy lanes (for the soil is clay and the traffic of a heavy kind) bordered by two-storeyed workmen's houses almost black too, save the newest, which show the redness of their bricks. Even in its rural days the parish of Hartlebury was a large one, so that the greater number of these half-joined groups of houses really belong to it, though most of them keep their old names, such as Thorley's Green; Stapple Gate, suggesting other times and different lives; Brierley Gate; Bartley End, whose "Black Lion" was once a meet of the East Staffordshire, but is now a maze of brick-fields. In effect Hartlebury, and the half-a-dozen villages adjoining, form one huge town of near a hundred thousand folk. It is one of the Residenzstädte of Commerce or Industry or Capital or Mammon—he goes by all those names, and is the king of modern life. And it cannot be said that in the outward show it is a capital of which that monarch need be proud. We hear much of the rapacity and ostentation of the petty German princes in old days, and much again of the misery of France under its monarchy. But set Hartlebury beside any of the older cities of Europe, with say no more than half the number of inhabitants, and on

which side will the balance incline? The German Residenzstadt has its palace with a park at the back, and fine avenues of limes, to which nowadays the citizens have generally free admission; the old French town has its boulevards, its parvis before the church or cathedral, its country roads bordered (near the town) with a double row of old poplars. What has Hartlebury to show? Well, it has what it calls its park on the Eldon Road, a dreary-looking place with new gravel paths, some masses of soot-laden bushes, and a few blighted trees.

More than one private park that bordered on the old Hartlebury has become a network of streets; in some cases the manor houses remain rather proudly among workmen's tenements. One of these is Panton Manor, where the Nettlethorpe family was settled for two or three centuries, and yet never got quite out of the yeoman class and into the landed aristocracy. The family has quite gone from the neighbourhood. The present owner-manager of "Nettlethorpe's," the Hartlebury Brewery, lives at "The Mount," another of the large white houses of the place—Mr. Wilfred Ingram his name. That is to say, at the beginning of this history he lived there.

Beside the mines round about it, and the mining villages which it has almost absorbed, Hartlebury proper owns its White Iron Works, its chemical works (Swift's), and has even ventured to add china works (Mason & Robertson's). The orthodox Staffordshire potteries, ~~to~~ has been said, are two leagues away. But it is the fact that the Staffordshire potteries have only been settled there by accident. The one material in the china factory which is difficult to obtain, the "china clay," comes mainly from Cornwall. Mason and Robertson's had as much right to call itself a Staffordshire pottery as Minton's in Stoke or

Wedgwood's in Etruria. It had more right to existence in one sense: for it had discovered and owned on a farm near Hartlebury a vein of this very same "china clay." Whether there really was much, or whether the local supply would soon run short, is what perhaps no one but the two partners Mason and Robertson knew; but it was a very common subject of speculation and rumour. The find had been Robertson's, who up to that time was only a tester at the chemical works. Robertson, Hector Robertson, was this year Mayor of Hartlebury. Hartlebury, it must likewise be mentioned, had lately set up a technical college.

The streets of this town are mostly narrow and the shops insignificant: their customers being almost entirely of the working class. Old-fashioned square panes are the rule: now and again a more enterprising business sends a flare of light from incandescent gas through plate-glass windows. Such an one is Leadbeater's—for fifty years chief grocery in Hartlebury, now developed into general stores. The flare is comparative, for when not in black rain Hartlebury lives in black mist; and of all the arrangements of which the town can boast that of its gas seems the most stricken with paralysis.

About six o'clock or half-past the streets of Hartlebury are usually thronged. Most of the manufactories disgorge their hands: then many miners from "the day shift" come back to clean themselves. Or maybe they have done so already, and now issue forth, some with their wives, the most part without, to enjoy the evening. Women bustle through the throng to make their purchases: a queue has already formed at the door of the Palace Theatre of Varieties: the public turn up their gas to look as gay as possible. Only a few of the folk in the streets

are really in a hurry: the most part are ready to pass the time of day with an acquaintance.

On the night of the 21st January 1899, these work-people lingered later and in larger numbers than was usual, attracted by an unusual event, the Infirmary Ball, which was being held in the Town Hall, or soon to be held; for the crowd was round about almost before the earliest guest arrived.

Amid the throng wandered interested, yet detached, a girl not more than six-and-twenty years of age: looking much less. It was indeed to a first view a peculiarly innocent and childlike face; but not lacking either knowledge or power to an observant eye. Nor did her figure, her physique, want an aspect of great well-being. The neck was rather thick: the body in its present swathings looked stumpy. That was an effect of dress. This above all might be said, that unlike the persons of at least fifty per cent. of unmarried women of twenty-six, even in these days of muscular development, there was here not even a far-off suggestion of excitability, of hysteria. The face was regular, not classical: most of all like the faces of those comely comfortable angels who figure in early Italian art. I do not mean Botticelli's, which might easily be hysterical, but Filippo Lippi the Elder's say, or in some of the sculptures of Donatello or Ghiberti. And that means that this girl might very well have passed for a boy, seeing that (I suppose) these angels are meant to be rather of the male sex than the female. For the present let her remain anonymous to us, as she was to the crowd: and distinct from it, apart from its hopes and fears; for all that she was then living in a little lodging in Coleherne Street.

As she walked about dressed in brown with a velvet

toque, underneath which a little fair colourless hair could be seen, this girl felt no discomfort of the smoky atmosphere, the muddy streets. All she saw seemed interesting, and what she heard; but as she was an artist, it was the sights rather than the sounds which gave her pleasure. The dimness of the streets was lit up now and again by the glare of a smelting fire from one of the hills round about Hartlebury, and then the shadows of the passers-by would be thrown upon a blank wall as it were an exhibition of *ombres chinoises*. This was to our onlooker particularly interesting, because she was making some experiments in designing after this fashion. She would not have felt that interest in all she heard and all she saw, if she had not had within her a source of constant content: not a positive source of pleasure, but a negative source of content. She felt that she had struck out a line for herself, or had it thrust upon her—she could hardly have said which—such as very few indeed of British girls do strike out or follow. And she realised how much of solid contentment, of physical well-being mostlike, had been the result.

She shall as yet be anonymous, in that in the streets of Hartlebury she was but the embodiment of eyes and ears.

The dance to be held in support of the hospital for all that portion of the county was patronised not only by the town magnates—"the aristocracy" to the working population—but by much greater people from outside. Hartlebury Town Hall is in the Cornmarket; and thither, following the general bent of the crowd, our onlooker now drifted. Around her talked workmen and their wives in that peculiar accent of the Western Midlands, where a pinched and almost cockney tone contends with a certain

northern breadth, so that men say "Oi" for I, but "spile" for "spoil."

"No, Oi'm not working at 'Arpur's now, Oi'm at Batten Lane. Oi'd took a 'place' at 'Arpur's ('place' had a technical significance, but the girl had not yet learned so much), and it was done. So I went to Batten Lane. . . . You're roight.* It's more dangerous, and it's very dirty. It's not sich a noice pit to work in, not by a long way, y're roight."

Then from another voice behind her she heard—

"Oi was in Lancasheer 'fore I coom 'ere. . . . No, it's not much good, and ye can 'ardly 'get,' ye know, it's that narrer. But for a married man it's not so bad, some ways. They imply a lot o' boys there. There's always work for boys there when there's noon for men."

The women were in greater force than the men.

"No, Tom 'ee's left Making's a good time back, that is. 'Ä gets three Shillings a week more than 'ä did at Making's. 'Ä loikes it very well. 'Ä's don it afore. Down the pit was the first place 'ee worked when 'ee was a boy. They'se loike pushing threw some stuff, and 'is clothes get torn till 'ee can 'ardly wear them, and 'ee cooms back as black as 'ee wer a coal-collier. But 'ee loikes it very well. Many-a-one I says to 'im, 'Well, Tom, 'ast 'ad enuf of thoy job?' And 'ee says, 'I loike it better than any job Oi've 'ad.' . . . 'Ere, stand aside. . . . 'Ere they coom, some of 'em. Tho'll be Brierley Lodge—Dr. Porter, y' know. . . . Oh, Barnfields, they left years ago; live out Rawston way. Whot ye say, Jenny? Ye don't see. Why, y' shud luke, child. Ye're getting sich a big girl I can't lift ye oop all th' toime. 'Ere cooms another. Well then, I'll lift ye oop a minnit. . . . Oh dear, on'y a gentleman. . . . Was it Mr. Robertson?• Well now, I didn't see:

that's funny. My sister Gladys, she's working at the Manor. They treat 'er very well, very well indeed."

"They say 'e's a koind mon is Robertson," said her neighbour, who on her side had a boy in charge. "Though there's soom as doosn't loike 'im. 'Ere's anuther. 'Ere, Tom lad, 'ere's anuther."

"They'll be fröm The Mount, coom down the 'ill. Yes, that was they. I sore them shur enuf. They don't go about s'much as they used to in old Mr. Ingram's time."

"Ä was a good man, Mr. Ingram. I loiked 'im as well as ony mon in 'Artlebury. Cap'n Ingram he don't seem quite loike 'is father was som'ow, by what they say. Not that I've never 'erd no 'arm of 'im."

"They can't be doing as well as they was, y' know. I expect that's it, y' know. Mr. Ingram 'ä was always out on Saturday, y' know, with the 'ounds—in 'is scarlet coat, y' know—very fine 'ä looked. 'Ere's another coming. Now, Jenny, if ye begin to cry,* child, I'll just slap ye. I can't 'old y' oop, I tell ye. Father, 'ere coom 'ere, and hold the child oop. She's that peevish and franzy, y' can't do nothing with 'er," the mother went on to explain to her friend, quite indifferent to the presence of Jenny in her father's arms; "Dr. Roberts, 'e can't find nothing the matter with 'er. We lost Ada very sudden. But her brothers is as strong as strong! . . . Who'll they be? Y' saw, Jenny, didn't ye? Did not they look beautiful? *Yes," she went on, returning to the Ingram subject, "mony uns I've seen 'im riding by. We lived down Brierley Lane in those days. 'Ä allus spoke to me."

"Didn't they keep their carriage in those days?" the neighbour asked.

"No, no. Always 'ad flies from Pawley's. Well, it was like this. Mrs. Ingram, she 'ad 'er carriage as now.

But never at night, if you understand me. . . . Oi wonder who these was. Very high folk, you may be sure."

Alas! that the Barnfield family could not have overheard. It was only three years since they had migrated to a genuine manor house, Fellbridge Park, very different from "The Manor" (Robertson's) known to the Hartlebury people. Mab Barnfield could hardly believe that their old existence at Brierley Lodge was real—so fresh, so glorious had life become for her now—in a fresh world that knew not the clank of engines, nor indeed industry of any kind, save industry in sport and games. People such as the Barnfields in their new incarnation were the same yet not the same with such people as Hector Robertson the Mayor. One by one the manor houses within a circle of five or six miles had fallen into the hands of the richer capitalists from this industrial centre, some by purchase, some as tenancies. These folk formed a new squirearchy, a county aristocracy of a kind. They were members of the East Staffordshire Hunt. All but the vulgarest were asked to functions more or less formal, more or less intimate, at the house of the great nobleman of those parts, the Duke of Tamworth—a Whig Duke and interested in "industry." To know "the" Duke, to be on speaking terms with "the" Duke, was for East Staffordshire much the same as being presented at Court. Those who were in this fashion *hof-fähig* stood on one side: those who were not upon another.

But the working folk, who looked so far from the outside, knew not of such distinctions. To them all alike who passed by in their ball dresses were beings of another world, envied, admired, hated, as it might be. What visions of flowers and swansdown and golden hair were those—flashing out on the soot-laden night! What quicken-

ing of heart-beats of admiration, of envy, and romance, in the dim crowd. If among these "hands" or colliers any was destined one day to become a master of men, the first stirrings of ambition most likely came to him from such sights as these. Through his upward career he would toil, denying himself countless pleasures, denying himself, as like as not, the pleasure of compassion and consideration for his fellow-men. To what end? Because the vision of those flowers and swansdown, of golden hair and delicate cheeks, had stirred in him a vague romance, a vague longing for he hardly knew what, and a restless discontent with his present life. Long before he had realised his plans, an isolated man with much hate and envy behind him and not much love round about, all possibility of making his dream a reality for himself was gone for ever. Half from benevolence and family affection, but half, too, because he could not bear that the first moving vision should be merely a mirage, he would make it his ambition that his children should realise that dream—that they should ride in their carriage, and wear, if possible, ermine for swansdown, and brighter jewels than any he had seen of old days. Thus alone might something be preserved. But the children themselves would look upon these possessions as theirs by nature: nor would it interest them in the least to think in what light they shone to the dingy crowd.

Meantime the fly from The Mount had got into some difficulties trying to break from the queue and threatening to smash against a lamp-post.

"Lord, whatever is he doing?" cried Jenny's mother, craning her neck. "Well, if that's not Pawley's George. 'A ought to be ashamed of hisself. And Captain Ingram and his sister in the fly."

Pawley's George was indeed the worse for liquor. After threatening the lamp-post he was now quarrelling with his fare. "What ye want to get out for? . . . Well, ain't yer going to give me nothing for miself? Hy there! No, I'll not move on. Call that genl'man back, please."

"The scoundrel!" Wilfred Ingram said, as he let his sister Janet pass into the building. Mr. Leadbeater, who was, like Wilfred, a member of the Infirmary Committee, effaced himself from the doorway. He went down and spoke to the policeman. The offending fly was hustled off, and now the Fellbridge carriage, the Barnfields', drew up. And though Mab Barnfield had been thinking with horror how completely they had been falling back into Hartlebury ways by coming so early, and that none of their set would be there so soon, when in the great hall they stumbled straight upon the Ingrams, the girl's heart gave a sensible thump of pleasure and also of wonder in herself that, while she had been reflecting that she would only see "Hartlebury people," these two had been quite out of her thoughts. For Brierley Lodge and The Mount are near neighbours, and their two families had been very intimate in bygone days. But of course the Ingrams were different. That is why she had not included them.

"This way to the ladies' room, this way, if you please," a white-waistcoated man was bawling continually.

Janet Ingram, turning round, saw her brother shaking hands with the new arrivals, and waited. There was half-a-moment's hesitation, then she and Mab kissed as in the old days. The three ladies disappeared together.

When Mab Barnfield came out again she saw that a short thick-set man had just come up to speak to Mr. Ingram. He had very black hair, very smooth, a bald place just at the top, and his black whiskers ended in

two perpendicular lines at right angles to the mouth and close to the lips.

"Oh yes, it's all right," Wilfred was saying with some impatience. "I . . ."

"It was only I hoped he'd not given you any trouble. But it doesn't matter, another time," and the speaker sidled off deferentially.

"Oh yes, thanks, thanks very much," Wilfred called after him, and to Miss Barnfield said, "I hope you'll give me a dance."

She gave him her card. "I know that g . . ."

"Why, it's Leadbeater," said Wilfred.

"So it is. Dear me!" There was a sort of dismay in her voice.

"Yes, you see he's on the Committee. He was Mayor last year, you know. He's not brought his family, I should think. . . . By Jove, you've got filled up already. I thought you'd only just come."

"Oh, father got us the cards. Those are some of the Cator boys—they're coming in force soon."

"How stupid of me!" Wilfred said, reflecting that he might have got a card for Janet. But after all, would it have been any use? Janet did not know "boys"—"Cator boys" or any others.

Mr. Barnfield, on his side heavily friendly, was asking Janet for a dance.

"I'm only good for a square dance, of course, Miss Ing—Janet. And besides, I don't want to take you away from the young men."

That might have been ironical, for Janet's card was as yet a complete blank. But she knew it was no more than one of Mr. Barnfield's stereotyped politenesses.

"He's not altered," she reflected. The five minutes

of "shaking themselves out" in the dressing-room had shown her how much Mab was so, and even her mother.

It was easier for her to sound the women. Barnfield was a perfectly good chap, but in the very act of saying "Miss Ing—Janet," he had a consciousness not unpleasant how his relations to this family had been almost reversed since he and Mrs. Barnfield with young children first settled at Brierley Lodge. His attitude then to the elder Ingram had been more nearly that of Leadbeater to Wilfred five minutes ago.

"How we used to admire Wilfred Ingram, Julia and I," were Mab's reflections, as she and her partner whirled round the half-empty ball-room. Wilfred had hardly said anything yet. "He never talked much in those days, I remember. But we thought that made him all the more noble. 'He's very proud,' we used to say to each other." And Mabel remembered how another girl among their friends had called him (from some book she thought), "Baron Ingram of Ingram Park." All these seemed very childish illusions to Mab now. She had come across much "grander" young men than Wilfred—if one could call him still a young man—and found none of the same "pride" in them. But though those old thoughts were illusions, no doubt, Mab sighed after them. She knew that romance had gone out of her life somehow. Now they came to a stop: she glanced sideways to see if her partner was going to say anything.

"There's room enough at any rate," was Wilfred's original remark. But on his face was a certain contraction of the eyebrows which quite kept up Mab's old notion of his "pride." He had seen Janet sitting out, and felt hurt.

Wilfred Ingram was thirty-six. He had finely cut

features and an air of distinction which to anyone who knew would have removed him from the category of Hartlebury people. When Mab and her sister (now married) had first begun to take him for a hero he was a soldier; but he had to leave the army through illness, and nothing remained but to join his father at the Brewery. It was lucky he had done so, as affairs turned out. Mab only recognised the more obvious titles to distinction which his circumstances and his career had given Mr. Ingram in their eyes as children. The good nose, pinched nostrils, and pencilled eyebrows, often as now contracted to a frown, all these had invested Mr. Ingram with a poetry which to her to-day seemed childish. Mab was much more "social" now; and such an effort as speculating on character was far too troublesome and much too foolish for these days. Only it was amusing to try and feel as she used to, or as she used to try to, following Julia's lead. All these reflections came as she was answering Wilfred's solitary remark.

"Yes, it's pleasant not knocking up against people at any rate. But it'll soon fill up. Do you remember a dance Mr. Mason once gave at Panton Manor? I remember it because somebody made a speech at supper."

"Yes, I remember that!" Wilfred said, and smiled at the memory.

"It didn't seem to me odd then, because it was almost the first grown-up dance I'd ever been to. Mr. Mason said he was the architect of his fortunes. You said (it was to Julia) that he was the stonemason of his fortunes."

"Good Lord! Did I ever say anything like that?"

"We thought it so clever *then*. . . . My father says it's really Mr. Robertson who made the business. He discovered something . . ."

"Is it? I didn't know."

"That's Mr. Robertson, isn't it?" She glanced in the direction of a tall black-haired man who had just come into the ball-room. "I saw him in the hall when we came in. I wonder where he's been all this time."

"Yes, that's him. He's Mayor of Hartlebury this year."

"He's going to speak to your—to Janet—ask her for a dance, I suppose."

"I hope she won't."

"Don't you like Mr. Robertson?"

"No, I don't. I don't know much about him."

"He's good-looking, isn't he? Janet's given him her card."

"I shouldn't think he can dance. He's a Scotchman. And besides, he's quite a bounder, you know."

"They're going to give him a testimonial though, I think."

"Are they? 'We' I should say."

"Yes. You ought to know. I hear things from my father now and then. Oh, I'm so glad we're out of all that."

"Thanks."

"Well, you would be too, I'm sure. Shall we go on again?" Mab had got over another of her old childishnesses, that of being afraid of hurting other people's feelings.

The waltz came to an end. Nobody appeared to claim Mabel Barnfield, and Wilfred hoped they would sit out together. He was beginning to notice how good-looking Mab was. "How she's come on in looks," he thought. In reality it was only that she was better dressed than of old. This was a square dance. The music sounded a few bars of the lancers. A fair propor-

tion of square dances was *de rigueur* in all public balls in Staffordshire. It was also Janet's and Mr. Barnfield's dance. Janet looked round rather wistfully as she stood up with her partner. Then Wilfred abandoned the idea of sitting out.

"Let us go and be their *vis-à-vis*," he said.

"It is rather ridiculous!" said Mab pettishly. But she went.

And Wilfred was glad he had done the fraternal act. Mr. Hector Robertson came up to their set with Mrs. Porter on his arm—the doctor's wife.

"They live where we used to, don't they?" Mab whispered.

"I'm afraid they're all suited," said Mrs. Porter.

"How do you mean 'suited'?" her partner asked. And when she explained. "Oh, I didn't know it was that way. Then we shall have to go somewhere else, I suppose."

Mab made a wry face. Wilfred omitted to tell her that Mrs. Porter was cousin to Leadbeater of the Stores. He felt ashamed of himself, and in a way angry with his partner, that he should have to apologise for Hartlebury to her, as if she belonged to a different world. Yet that was his attitude, Wilfred could not deny it.

Just about the end of the dance this position of inferiority was still more emphasised. For behind them a voice said, "Oh, here's Mab!" There were two young men behind them, very much alike, fair and gentleman-like, with well-fitting clothes. Mabel Barnfield turned round at once and greeted the two boys with much cordiality—entered into a conversation with them, till Wilfred and his partner were called to order by the entire set.

"Those are the twins, you know," Mabel explained to Wilfred.

"The Cators, oh, I know," said her partner. Then they were separated for awhile, for it was the last figure.

"I thought you must know them," Mabel said, when her partner's hand had found her once more. "Haven't you met them out hunting or anything?"

"Yes, I've met them. But I've not been out for a long time now."

"Oh, don't you care for it? I adore hunting."

"I care for it. But I can't afford it," he said shortly.

"What a bore! Of course the frost's stopped it all lately. But just after Christmas we had a splendid run. We met at Ball Gate, and found in Leighton spinney."

The dance was over now, they were moving away. It was certainly not an excess of tact on Miss Barnfield's part that she went on to describe how they had run without a check to Milton gravel-pits—fifty minutes, a good run for such a close country as East Staffordshire.

"Yes, wasn't it stunning?" broke in the voice of Herbert Cator, the youngest of the twins. "It's my dance now, y' know. I was awfully glad I was down for that."

Mabel left Wilfred without much ceremony, and Wilfred heard the young man's voice dying away as he went on talking. He was telling her of some accident he had had with one of his grandfather's horses, over which it seemed the old gentleman had cut up rather rough.

These twins, Percy and Bertie Cator, were the grandchildren (by the second son) of old Mr. Herbert Cator of Touchet Park, one of the last of the old families of the neighbourhood still to be in residence. After his death Touchet Park would no doubt follow the fate of almost all the country houses of the district, for old Cator's eldest

son, Herbert the younger, very rarely came into Staffordshire. The Rev. Perceval Cator was Rector of Fellbridge; so that the intimacy of Mabel and the twins—when they were at home for the vacation—was a matter of course.

CHAPTER II.

IN the hall by the side of the buffet stood a little group of men who were either on the Infirmary Committee or who were patrons in some way of the charity. These two or three men were also members of the Town Council. There was Mr. Hector Robertson, the Mayor of Hartlebury, a Scot who knew nothing about dancing, but had asserted his right to take part in it by dancing one set of lancers with Mrs. Porter. With that assertion of rights he was content. Leadbeater of Leadbeater's Stores, the ex-Mayor, was of a much humbler nature. He had not even brought his family. Mrs. Porter had discouraged it. She was Leadbeater's cousin; but then she was the wife of a doctor. Then there was old Mr. Swift of the chemical works. And why he had come nobody could tell, unless it were to taste what the buffet offered. He and Robertson were never on the best of terms. With them, but hardly of the group, stood Mr. Beck, the senior curate of Hartlebury, a thin dark man with a simian countenance. He was speaking with Mr. Ommersley, the stipendiary magistrate.

Leadbeater's idolatry was the Ingram family of The Mount. He and his father (in the capacity of grocer only he) had served the Ingrams, Wilfred Ingram the elder, Wilfred Ingram the son, for thirty years or more. For Leadbeater Mr. Wilfred Ingram was always Captain

Ingram, though Wilfred had never attained that rank in the army. And the ex-Mayor's present purpose (unknown to the Ingrams of The Mount) was to get the job of painting Mr. Robertson's presentation portrait for another Ingram, Rudolf by name, a man personally quite unknown to Leadbeater, who had been mentioned in the papers. Mr. Rudolf Ingram, as Leadbeater explained, had lately been "employed" to paint the portrait of Lord Marston, the Mayor of Macclesfield. Leadbeater, while almost subservient to an Ingram, was polite to everybody.

"It's perhaps hardly in order bringing up these questions before you, Mr. Mayor," he said to Robertson; "but I thought it best to enquire previously if you'd anyone you'd fixed your thoughts on to execute the work."

"No, no. Settle it your own way," said Mr. Hector Robertson, with a recognisable Scottish accent; "only I'll be sorry for anyone who has to paint my mug."

He was, in fact, a distinctly good-looking man, and knew it: of a good height, well-built, dark, with finely pencilled eyebrows and particularly well-carved nose. The mouth, indeed, was vulgar, but it was mostly hidden by his black moustache and beard: his cheeks showed that strong contrast between red and white which is (I know not why) rather characteristic of people deficient in birth and breeding. Robertson's speech and manner were not alone designed to suggest the opposite of his words, and dictated by that specially fatuous vanity which comes from the north of the Tweed. It was meant also to express a shade of opposition to the Ingram choice.

"Well," said Mr. Leadbeater, "I cannot call myself a judge of art. But I've read what the papers say of this portrait of the Mayor of Macclesfield. I went myself to look at the portrait of Lord Marston, and having the

honour of knowing his lordship a little, all I can say is the likeness seemed to me marsterly—marsterly. . . .” He brought these words out with an air.

“Marstonly, marstonly,” Mr. Beck whispered to his neighbour.

“Of course,” Mr. Leadbeater went on, “I only broach the matter at this moment. In due course I shall bring it before the Town Council along with these newspaper *critiques*.” And he was evidently proud of the use of such a word. “Perhaps,” he said, turning to Mr. Swift, “you’d like to glance your eyes over them.”

“Thank you,” said Swift, “I’ll look at them.” He knew not one word about pictures. But like Leadbeater, he was of the Ingram faction.

Here they separated, and soon after Wilfred himself appeared on the scene.

It was soon after leaving Mabel—being left by Mabel—that Wilfred strolled into the hall and found Ommersley still there. Ommersley was a very active member of the Infirmary Committee.

“How do you do, Mr. Ingram?” he said. “I think the ball is filling up very well. Have you been dancing? . . . No, I don’t dance myself now. . . . My wife, you know, she’s not strong enough for those sort of entertainments. By-the-bye, it’s a curious thing, but you know the truth is old Mrs. Goodrich is dying, they tell me. So very likely we don’t want this ball at all.”

“Is she expected to leave much to the Infirmary?”

“Oh, I’ve always understood so. You’re an older inhabitant than I am. Don’t you know her? She took particular interest in this new wing, I know. And of course she’s always subscribed very largely. But I won’t keep you from dancing. • Good-bye.”

Dances had come and gone. When he came back into the ball-room Wilfred found Janet sitting out. So he waltzed with her.

"Well, I should think we've about done our duty," he said at the end. But glancing at the clock he saw to his dismay it was only eleven.

"We ought to stay an hour more, I think," Janet said.

"There won't be any supper to be got before twelve, so we must stay."

"I don't care about that much."

"Are you engaged for many dances?"

"Only one. To Mr. Armitage."

"You didn't have to dance with Robertson, I hope. I saw him ask you."

"Hush! . . . He was close by," Janet said, when they had waltzed a little way off. "I should have had to dance with him if he had asked me, as my card was empty. But I really don't know whether he meant to ask me or not. I couldn't understand what he meant. He said something about wishing he could ask me to dance a reel with him."

"Scottish facetiousness, I suppose. But he doesn't *know* you. He'd no business to ask. I should have declined straight away."

"I got to know him, you see, in that Thorley's Green affair, because I work there."

Wilfred pished. "But that doesn't count," he said.

At any rate he was glad to see that Janet got three more dances — one with Mr. Armitage, or Professor Armitage, the head of the Technical College (he danced abominably, but still . . .); one with young Dalton, a solicitor's son, quite a nice boy, who was at Cambridge; and one (though that was only another square) with Beck, the

senior curate. As a member of the Committee, Wilfred considered (since those few words with Ommersley) that he was exempted from dancing. He even introduced two people: for by a fatal oversight the Committee had never thought of appointing stewards. Consequently the ball divided itself into half-a-dozen different sets. By far the rowdiest set of all was that in which Mabel played a part, along with some young Harpurs, sons of Harpur the coal-owner, the young Cators, and now two or three other young men and women from the "county." A young Ramsay, Lord Morecome's son, and young Thicknesse, were of the number. To all these the whole affair was one vast joke. Two Miss Thicknesses, and two Miss Lilfords whom Wilfred knew nothing of, and Violet Harpur and Mabel Barnfield, were the girls in this party. Wilfred watched its proceedings as from another planet.

That night Janet made up her mind that she was too old to go out to dances. It seemed hard, for she was not yet thirty-one. What was certain was that this dance had been more or less dust and ashes. Perhaps it was because she was less sociable than Eva had been. Their household was less sociable, less sociable in every way than it had been a few years ago before Eva married—and during that year when Hugh was in England. The Barnfields going away—that too had made a difference. Janet did not realise that the greatest difference of all was made by Wilfred himself. As his father's successor, this Wilfred was invited to fill the posts which the elder Ingram's death had vacated, sat on the same committees, was a member of the Town Council. But whereas his father had been one of the most active, most benevolent and most popular men in Hartlebury, nobody felt as if

the son belonged to the place. During his few years in the army Wilfred had in fact held Hartlebury in horror: more than he himself knew. Nor did he guess at all how strongly the sentiment remained and let itself be seen. He was very far from being popular. And naturally the effect of this showed itself gradually and more and more as time went on. Eva had in a great degree parried the blow: so had Hugh during one year of furlough; for Hugh, though he was not exactly sensitive where other people's feelings were concerned, was gay and sociable and an excellent sportsman. He got on all right with people such as the young Harpurs, whom Wilfred detested. And Janet knew that though there was not much confidence between her and her elder brother, she was so far like him in character that she did not easily make friends.

But at all events she had made one close friend lately—Beatrice Armitage, the wife of the head of Hartlebury Technical College. The Armitages had only been in the neighbourhood two years. In the thought of what a vast difference that made to her—Janet—she went happily to sleep.

And her brother, though he hardly ever thought things out or reasoned to himself of his feelings, through those feelings themselves recognised, as Janet had done, that the ball had not been a success. He had for too long disapproved of most things to be surprised at this or to want to ask why. The change in Mab Barnfield—those rowdy young men spoke to his nerves: as too did Mab's good looks after their fashion. Not that he would have dreamt of marrying a girl like Mab Barnfield: his whole nature was different from hers. Even when he had been standing at Mabel's side in the lancers, and physically conscious of her great good looks—above all of the deli-

cate bloom of her cheeks—Wilfred had looked across with mental approval at Janet, undistinguished in looks, colourless enough beside the younger girl—yet with another sort of distinction which a Barnfield could never attain.

A Barnfield—well, that applied to Julia too. At the same time there was room for sentimental regrets in that direction. To the whole domesticity in both households a marriage between Wilfred and one of the young ladies at Brierley Lodge seemed ordained of heaven. Wilfred was greatly admired by his father's servants, who, like one or two other people in Hartlebury, insisted on giving him brevet rank and calling him "Captain Ingram." After Julia's marriage, their old cook (she was dead now) had expressed her disappointment. "I always thought you'd have had her, Mr. Wilfred. She was a nice pretty young woman. And they say her father came down very handsome." Wilfred had known at one time that it only depended on himself whether he married Julia or no. And if the father had "come down very handsome," how different his worldly position would have been to-day!

In the early days of the Barnfields' residence in Brierley Lodge, when some lawn-tennis was on between the two families, and the elder Wilfred *par exception* had taken a racquet, he had been admonished by Mr. Barnfield, his antagonist—"You'll have to fetch that coat off, Mr. Ingram, if you're going to do any good at this game." (It may even have been—in those days—"You'll 'ave.") The sentence had become proverbial at The Mount. It was that sentence in reality which had forbidden the banns 'twixt Wilfred and Julia Barnfield.

Julia had not been quite so pretty—so "fetching," as the word goes—as Mabel, but she had a great look of goodness. Wilfred thought she would have made an

excellent wife: that she did make an excellent wife. For of course she had not broken her heart over her first girlish disappointment. She was now married to a barrister, Hammond by name, and living in London. Wilfred had met her once with two children, all three very brown and healthy, just back from Dinard in Brittany, with a clear light of content and happiness in Julia's blue eyes. Wilfred himself never went abroad, and hardly knew where Dinard was. After that he had dined once at the Hammonds'. The husband was son of a London police magistrate: quite a gentleman. Wilfred still noticed a touch of Staffordshire accent in Mrs. Hammond. Her husband very likely found that not unattractive: a touch of provincial accent is no harm. And Julia was altogether too good and too natural not to be a lady in every true sense of the word. But then Hammond had never heard the remark about "fetching that coat off."

CHAPTER III.

It was called The Mount. It stood among its bushes, bushes that were darker than by nature, with a rookery, but rather a meagre one, at the back; it stood there high and white, a thing isolated and strange, not in the country and not in the town. About it were mean red-brick cottages and workmen's houses, an agglomeration that might be called a village, save that it stretched one arm northward to join the town of Hartlebury—this was the Brierley Road—and in the other direction ran out foolishly and aimlessly toward what country lay about—bare fields whose very grass had a dinginess and that were fenced as often by sleepers or old corrugated iron as by quickset.

This half-hearted village had a foolish name: it was called Mount Hill: no doubt because the high white house had seen better days when it once lorded over rural solitudes.

Among all its brothers or cater-cousins, such as Brierley Lodge, Honeybourne, Panton Manor, all like it white houses amongst the smoke-blackened brick, this was the most conspicuous; higher than most in its site, and preternaturally high in form, rather like a fragment cut out of some London terrace—say one of those that look on Regent's Park—than a house in the country. To the indwellers of the dingy red-brick cottages and houses round about the inhabitants of The Mount and of all its brother houses went by the name of the "Aristocracy." In any other land but ours they would have frankly accepted their superior fortune. In France, Wilfred Ingram, the owner of The Mount, would most like have been Mayor of Hartlebury, that town of many manufactures, and have felt that he had nothing to ask, nothing to apologise for to God or man. In Germany he would have been the director of one of the coal companies or iron foundries round about. But he would have been *von Adel* too, an ex-cavalry officer, and hob-nobbing on equal terms with the commander of the nearest garrison.

But in England—shall we call it idealism, shall we call it snobbishness?—no one is ever quite satisfied with his position, no one but looks upon it as provisional and half a matter for apology. And Wilfred Ingram had his full share of the national vice or national virtue.

A curious solemnity and dulness had fallen on the place of late years, for the reasons which have in part been set forth. For Wilfred there was this excuse, that "business" was not good; and the Hartlebury Brewery

had undergone a crisis of which he alone knew the full extent and significance. So that the dinners of these three—Wilfred, Janet, and their mother—in the large high dining-room were often rather funereal. On this particular evening, however, the master—or the young master, as he was still called by some—was in better spirits than usual.

"What do you think Leadbeater has done?" he said. "You know they were going to have a portrait of Robertson the Mayor. Well, Leadbeater, without saying anything to me, has fished up a lot of newspaper paragraphs about a portrait Rudolf's been doing of the Mayor of Macclesfield, and has been to see it. According to the papers it's very good. So he's going to propose that Rudolf shall paint Robertson."

"Oh, how interesting! Then we shall see Rudolf. I've not seen him since he stayed here from school—you remember, one Christmas holidays."

"Is the portrait at all good?" asked Mrs. Ingram, with the pessimistic attitude to things in general that Wilfred inherited from his mother.

"I don't know. I've not seen it. Leadbeater says it is. But of course . . ."

"If it pleases a man like Mr. Leadbeater I don't suppose it would us."

"Still, I heard from Mary how well he was getting on," Janet said.

"The papers praised him. Anyhow, if they decide on it, we must ask him here. . . . Only . . ."

"Only what?"

"It'll bring us in touch with that boulder Robertson."

"Why do you dislike him so much?"

"I don't dislike him 'so much.' I've told you before,

I keep out of his way as much as I can, and don't know much about him. But he's a conceited ass, and inclined to be insolent sometimes."

"Anyhow we must have Rudolf here," said Janet. "It will be great fun seeing him again. I don't believe he's been to see any other of his relations—except of course at Milford."

"Uncle Johnnie told me he cost them a good lot at one time. But he's supporting himself now."

"He's been abroad several years."

"Yes, I know; in Germany somewhere."

"I believe he's very tall now."

To both Wilfred and Janet the prospect of seeing this long-lost relation was cheering. Staying visitors at The Mount hardly ever came from outside the circle of the Ingram family. When the time came Wilfred had some misgivings—on the subject of evening dress, for instance. It was to be hoped that their guest would at least wear a dinner-jacket, as a gentleman should. Wilfred would be humiliated else, both for him and the whole Ingram family; and then again he would be humiliated if it was found impossible to fit Rudolf up. For Wilfred was but middle-sized; and Rudolf as a boy had been tall—was reported to be so still.

On that matter report had not lied. The first vision Janet had of the new-comer from her window was, stretched half-way out of his fly a little way down the drive. A rough tow-coloured head and reddish moustache and beard were noticeable even at that distance. When the flyman pointed with his whip the long body pulled in again. Janet got down to the steps just as the fly stopped.

Rudolf blinked and looked bewildered as he came up

the steps. "Oh, how do you . . ."—he fixed keen but not bright eyes on his cousin—"You're Janet." Janet showed him into the drawing-room. "O Aunt Julia, how do you do?" (The mother made faint sounds of welcome.) "It's a pull up here, isn't it? I was just telling the man I'd walk up the hill and he said it was the house. It's cold enough."

"Yes; isn't it?" Mrs. Ingram condescended to say, shivering. "They've only just lit the fire," she added complainingly.

"Why, you've been here before," said Janet.

"Have I? Yes, of course I have—one Christmas. I came from Marlborough. But it was so dark then I never saw the house."

"Oh, come! It couldn't have been dark all day and night."

"No, I suppose not. I remember you had a pond you skated on. I hadn't got any skates, so I slid. . . ."

"Ah, it's gone now," said Mrs. Ingram.

"Gone! How odd!"

"Yes," said Janet. "They've made that mine since you were here, and somehow that made the water disappear."

Rudolf looked out of the window. The mine was a very large one, some three-quarters of a mile away as the crow flies. The glare of a smelting fire sprang up and sank; now it shone white, now red with giant reflections on a bank of dun smoke; below glowed a field of ruddy cinders.

"Oh yes," said the new-comer, brightening up, "I saw that mine as I was driving up. It's stunning!"

Janet stared with amazement. But at that moment Mrs. Ingram in a languid way spoke of the cold, and

rang the bell for tea. She could not pursue the matter. Instead she took stock of her cousin. He was big enough, or long enough, for his shoulders were rather sloping, his chest rather narrow; and he was ugly enough, she thought. So unlike an Ingram! What an extraordinary contrast to Wilfred! Rudolf stood rubbing his large hands before the fire. And then they talked again of the weather!

It seemed wicked to Janet—this cousin, with so much news of the family to take and give—to be talking of the weather. She insisted on more personal topics.

"My father? Oh, he's all right. They're all all right. Bob does a lot of the work now—(That's like your brother, isn't it? I mean he just stepped into Uncle Wilfred's shoes)—so I suppose he likes it. I was there last autumn."

"Not at Christmas?"

"No. I should have gone very likely, only I happened to get a portrait to do. A chap who was going out to India, and wanted to leave his portrait with his wife." Rudolf gave a little chuckle.

"That seems very natural."

"Does it? I daresay. Well, I'm going home next month. I daresay I shall paint a bit there."

"It's very pretty at Milford. I stayed . . ." And Janet gave an account of a visit paid the previous autumn.

Rudolf stared. It was the word "pretty" which had no meaning for him.

"I daresay I shall find something to do to keep my hand in. Polly tells me . . ."

"You don't call Mary 'Polly,' do you? I thought everybody had given that up."

"I forgot. No; she doesn't like it."

"What was she telling you?" Janet asked.

"Telling me? What was I saying? . . . Oh, only that some of the labourers wear smock frocks still."

"But you'll do the landscape, sha'n't you? That view from Summerly Hill?"

"From the top of a hill." He laughed. "Oh no." Rudolf did not seem to want to discuss art. But his eyes strayed to the window and seemed to become fascinated by the sight of the fires opposite. "By Jove! this would be the place to paint in," he said.

That was of course a joke. Janet laughed. And at this moment Wilfred came in. Presently the dressing-gong sounded.

"Oh, haven't you been shown your room yet?" Wilfred asked, pointing out, as he so often had to do, a social misdemeanour. "All right. I'll show you. We dine rather early."

The two women opened their eyes. Seven-thirty was for Hartlebury-on-Dane a late hour. Wilfred had only a year ago got his mother to agree to the adjournment from seven.

"Yes," said Rudolf, this time with a curious acuteness, as if he were reading his cousin's thoughts behind his forehead, "I've brought down dress clothes with me. I didn't know whether you went in for that sort of thing. They don't at Milford. You have to have them in London."

The newcomer looked fairly clean and brushed-up when presently he stood with Wilfred on the hearthrug in the drawing-room. An amazing contrast, certainly! Wilfred, not more than five foot eight, clean-featured, shaven, rather bilious-complexioned, with vivid dark eyes and dust-coloured hair: Rudolf, four or five inches higher, loose-limbed, a little stooping, large-footed, tow-headed,

with red "full-beard," to use the German phrase. His face was of a too delicate pink-and-white, suggesting possible lung-trouble; his nose a trifle pimply; his mouth was large and loose; his eyes a commonplace grey. Rudolf was evidently somewhat short-sighted. To make up he had now and again a concentrated gaze, showing a painter's habit of *using* his eyes. This last characteristic Janet gradually found the most noticeable in him. But then she had never known artists. At times it shocked her, as to see him fixedly watching Lizzie while she handed the plates. At other times it was embarrassing: if one addressed him a question and saw that he was looking at a shadow in one corner of the room.

"Of course you've not seen the man you're going to paint?" Wilfred asked.

"No. Robertson's his name, isn't it?"

"He's not a bad-looking chap—I should think lots of people would say. I believe Janet admires him rather."

"I never said so."

"Oh no, it was Mabel Barnfield who said he was very handsome. He's an awful bounder, any way."

"I don't know that I've spoken to him half-a-dozen times," Janet said. "But he is said to have done a lot of good."

"I think he makes himself a nuisance."

"But there have been a great many deaths at Thorley's Green."

Thorley's Green lies on the farther side of Hartlebury-on-Dane; and the "Green" in the name is an irony.

"Oh, I'm not defending the Town Council."

Here Rudolf broke into the dialogue. "Have you ever been Mayor of Hartlebury?" he asked his cousin.

"No," said the other, with a touch of resentment.

"Uncle Wilfred was, though, I know," the new-comer said, turning to Janet. "Because I remember my father was staying here once, and a mare of Uncle Wilfred's got a strain. He asked the man, 'How's the mare?' and he said" (Rudolf chuckled), "'Oh, he's very well, sir. He went down to the brewery this morning.'"

"They insisted on your father being Mayor that year," Mrs. Ingram said languidly to Janet. She was not pleased that Rudolf should have alluded to such a vulgar episode in the family life. Wilfred was not pleased either. Janet alone took up the subject.

"Yes, I remember that. That was James Turner who brought in your things."

"That chap! He talks of you as 'the captain.'"

"I know he does," Wilfred said. "I can't get him out of it."

"I suppose you're captain of volunteers?"

"Wilfred was in the army, you know," Janet said.

"Were you?" Rudolf turned to his male cousin. "I thought it was Hugh."

"Hugh *is* in the army," Janet said.

"I remember now. You got the fever or something in India, didn't you?"

"That's it," Wilfred assented.

"Oh, then you did not choose brewery? It's a very good thing, isn't it? You haven't offered me any beer, though," he added, with a mock regret, not realising why he was treading on most of the corns present.

"Would you really have liked some?" Janet asked.

"I always like beer if I can get it."

"Fancy," thought both Mrs. Ingram and Wilfred, "asking for beer at dinner!"

"It's a way they have in Germany, isn't it?" asked Janet. "How long were you in Germany? Where?"

"Three years—at Munich."

"And where before that?"

"At Paris."

"Which did you like the best?"

"Oh, for painting Paris is played out. They do much better work in Bavaria now." That was a standing dogma with Bavaria and with Rudolf Ingram. "By the way," he said, "there's a little girl living here I must go and see."

Mrs. Ingram gave a sort of cry. Not because she really thought he meant anything wrong by that, but because she had begun to take a dislike to Rudolf. Her strongest maternal sentiment was reverence for Wilfred's dignity; and in such reverence their new guest seemed lacking.

"Mother! What's the matter?" Janet asked.

"Nothing." She only heaved a sigh and arched her eyebrows at the vulgarity of the world in general. If "a little girl" meant a lady, it was in the worst taste. . . . If not—it was worse still.

"How do you mean, a girl here? Who is she?" Janet asked.

"Minnie Vaughan her name is. I knew her in Munich. She lives in Hartlebury. That's all I know."

"I don't see how we can find her. What is she? Do you know?"

"A designer in some china-works, I fancy."

"That must be Mason & Robertson's," Wilfred said. "That's the only pottery in Hartlebury."

"Where's the place they call 'The Potteries'?"

"About six miles off. But Mason's set up a china-factory here."

"She's an artist then, your friend?" Janet asked.

"Of course she is."

"Well, we could"—Janet saw no consenting sign in Mrs. Ingram, but dashed on in opposition—"we could ask her here while you're staying,"

"Anyhow I shall go and see her," Rudolf said.

But here the subject dropped. •

Rudolf was not so unobservant as might be thought. He had noticed a darkening of Wilfred's looks when he said, "Brewing's a very good business, isn't it?" but misinterpreted its import. "Thinks I'm going to borrow money," Rudolf said to himself with an inward chuckle and just that shadow of resentment which a man always feels when wrongly suspected of an act that in other circumstances he would have been quite likely to commit. For the last two years all borrowing of money was in the past for Rudolf. In a true cousinly spirit (which hardly needed the fillip of slight resentment), having discovered a raw place, he thought he would rub it again.

"Yes," he said, when they were alone. "It must be very nice stepping into a good thing like a brewery."

Wilfred hesitated a moment. He had a natural secretiveness about his affairs. But then after all this guest was an Ingram. Without realising it, Wilfred had been a good deal looking forward to his cousin's visit. He lived a frightfully isolated life: always on more or less formal terms with his fellow-citizens. The only companionship he got from his own sex was when he ran up to London for a few days at a time, enjoying the hospitality of his club, the Junior Army and Navy. That was companionship, because his associates were gentlemen. But it never approached intimacy. Of the males of his own family he saw scarcely anything—since Hugh's last

furlough. And he and Hugh were not on very good terms now. One bachelor uncle—Uncle John or Johnnie—who was co-executor of the elder Wilfred Ingram's will, he saw once or twice a year.

"No," he said gloomily, "this isn't a good business. My father worked it up. It was quite a local affair till he did that. But then when he came here, things were quite different."

He paused, but Rudolf made no remark. In what was really a desperate hope of sympathy, Wilfred went on—

"Hartlebury's become a regular manufacturing place. There's a chemical works on the Eldon Road; of course there have always been some coal-pits in this neighbourhood; but there are twice as many as there used to be. Mason & Robertson we were talking of—that's new . . ."

"All the more throats to fill," said Rudolf incredulously.

"Yes, that's all very well. But people don't like a brewery in such a stinking hole as Hartlebury's become now. In fact . . ."—he hesitated again to bring out the fact, awful for him but inappreciable for a stranger—"we're only a branch of Albury's Brewery now."

"Well, isn't Albury's a first-rate concern?"

"In a way it is. But it's a limited company now, and they've over-capitalised it."

"Then you're safe enough, I should think, if you're in that," said Rudolf. "I'd rather be over-capitalised than under-capitalised."

"There's no use trying to explain, it doesn't interest him," Wilfred reflected.

And soon after they got up to go into the drawing-room. Rudolf towering in his loose height above this

tight-set, dark figure, clapped his cousin on the back with a huge red hand.

"Well, I'm not going to borrow any money from you, my dear chap," and he laughed.

It was only later when he was alone in his own room that Wilfred realised the monstrous thought that had been in his cousin's mind.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a blow. The strange thing about characters such as Wilfred Ingram's is that they never acknowledge, even in their most secret thoughts, the true extent or nature of their wishes, hopes, their affections, or disappointments. For their biographer it is a double difficulty. For can they be said to have these feelings or these wishes which lie buried so deep that they are found ingrained only, and never show leaves or flowers—never, that is, until some crisis comes—then, like the juggler's aloe, they grow up high in one night and bear not leaves only, but, like enough, a bitter fruit. Nature and tradition had conspired to give Wilfred Ingram this dark secretive habit; the tradition of what he considered his order and the stoicism which it enjoined.

Certainly Rudolf's slap on the back did not reach the magnitude of a crisis. But it came at the end of a series of small provocations. The Infirmary Ball of two months ago had something to do with it, along with the memories of Julia Barnfield which that ball had evoked, and which had troubled Wilfred longer than he realised; and also the sight there of Janet almost without partners, and Mab having a good time with her Cator boys and the others.

There had been some disputes with Robertson at the Town Council: which Wilfred's loyalty to his family had prevented him from dealing with as he had wished. For it would not be fair, he thought, to deprive Rudolf of his job. And this very cousin for whom he had made some sacrifices was to cap all by that slap on the back and his "I'm not going to borrow money from you."

If all these thoughts in Wilfred were scarcely thoughts, they germinated only the better from being underground. He did not lie awake (for long) and brood over them; but they coloured his dreams. Outside The Mount showed its white nun-like face to the night and to the moon, still short of the full. It had begun to descend toward the wooded hills on the right. The woods, bare still, seemed to sleep under a rustic charm. But the face of The Mount could not escape the glare of the furnace-fire which rose and fell; and now it seemed all soft moonlight and now again blushed red as if the nun had been exposed to mortal shames.

The Ingram family had no natural connection with Hartlebury and its commercial activities. Through a certain retired navy-lieutenant disabled in the Great War, a great-grandfather of the existing Wilfred Ingram, it passed back and was lost in the glory which then unquestionably and still, though with lessened rays, surrounded the landed gentry of England. But the older branch had disappeared, William Ingram of Morton Park, Lieutenant John's elder brother, having had no male heir. John married after his retirement a parson's daughter, and a second John was born when his father was past middle age. This may be the reason that with him the family took a new direction—a new orientation. For John, our

Wilfred's grandfather, was a scholar, a Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge. But for a curious kink of obstinacy in his character (a characteristic inherited by his grandson) which prevented him from accepting things as they were and making the best of them, this John might have gone far. An imprudently early marriage had forced him into schoolmastering. The obstinacy of his character showed itself in the fact that, because he had been previously called to the bar and "visioned" public life as his career, he would regard his actual profession as a stop-gap only. Thus he refused to take orders for this reason—not from any scruples of conscience. Scruples of conscience on such a matter, at any rate among high Tories, such as was this John Ingram, were quite out of place in the forties. The result was that while the author of *Musarum Vestigia* (it was still in use in school during my day) might have looked for the headmastership of one of the great public schools—and to have ended his life on the Episcopal bench, he did in fact end his soured disappointed days as headmaster only of Showborough Grammar School. For no layman had in those days a chance of rising to the higher places in the profession of schoolmaster.

His salary was a pretty good one; but then in his time families were families. They ranged upon an average between eight and a baker's dozen, with spasmodic bounds to sixteen. Ingram the grandfather had nine, of whom six were boys. And now once again the strain of ill-luck—I speak from a worldly point of view—persisted in the Ingrams. The two eldest boys, John and Edgar, while the father had still hopes and temper enough left, himself, to take his sons in hand, gave brilliant promise. But John died at school—from over-pressure. Edgar took

exhibitions from Showborough to Winchester, scholarships from Winchester, and in due course became Fellow of New College. There he came under the influence of the second wave of Tractarianism—or shall we say that now fixed lagoon thereof?—over which brooded Edward Pusey, the Professor of Divinity. To average Tory churchmanship, strongly tinged at this time with evangelicism, such as was old John Ingram's, this Puseyism, as it was called, was marked visibly with the mystic ciphers 666—the number of the Beast. 'Twas worse still when Edgar 'verted altogether to the older confession. In the memories of his brothers and sisters Edgar had lingered as a wonder and á saint. But long before his death he had almost disappeared from their ken, absorbed into the Society of Jesus. He wrote an improved Greek grammar which is prized at Stoneyhurst.

After this second blow the father refused altogether to concern himself with the education* of his other children. The four remaining sons were Hugh (he was the father of Rudolf), Wilfred, Strange (a family name), and a second John—born after the death of the first. These got such education as was provided at Showborough, and were then launched in life, in some cases with the necessary premiums, in some without them. Hugh was a land-agent; Wilfred as we know became a brewer; John was a solicitor; and Strange, who should have occupied that place, and been the honest lawyer of the family, had instead adopted the calling of lame duck. (Without one such, no family is complete.) He had married an impossible wife: rolled from situation to situation, with continued calls on the funds of the family; and was now paymaster on a line of vessels which plied from London to Bordeaux. Fortunately Strange had no children. Wilfred's father, long-suffering

in all things and with strong family feelings, had once had Strange and his wife to stay at The Mount. Wilfred had still some humiliating recollections bound up with that visit. They were seen no more but still heard of. The wife wrote from time to time to say that her husband gave her no money: he to explain that in his absences she spent it in drink. To which she countered that he had another wife in Bordeaux. A squalid history! With John, who was a bachelor, lived two unmarried sisters, Emilia and Harriet. The eldest sister in that family had married and was now dead.

As Wilfred Ingram had told Rudolf, his father had worked up the brewery. It had belonged to a great-uncle of the first Wilfred on the mother's side—"Nettlethorpe's" the name of it then, which still lingered in the mouths of some of the older inhabitants of Hartlebury. Old Tom Nettlethorpe had been the type of what one may call a semi-country gentleman—half gentleman, half yeoman—in the days before the Repeal of the Corn Laws. He lost all his children in his lifetime. They were not all dead when he invited his great-nephew to come into the concern—not as a partner, only as manager. The brewery had been supposed to manage itself so far as the Nettlethorpe family was concerned: until one manager disappeared with a good many thousand pounds. Wilfred Ingram the elder was not a heaven-born brewer. But changing one word—to him one might apply a sentence of Hazlitt's on Goldsmith—He performed miracles of work by pure happiness of nature, and his greatest fault was unconsciousness of his own worth. ('Tis "skill," not "work," in the original.) The Hartlebury Brewery became once more a successful concern. What was not quite so satisfactory for his children, Wilfred the elder got the

reputation of being the rich member of the family. When money was wanted he was expected to come forward first—and last: being the most generous of men, he always did.

It seemed at one time that there was to be no successor in this business which the elder Wilfred had revived. Both the boys fixed their choice steadily on the army. Then Fate stepped in. A typhoid fever in India followed by “thrombosis of the femoral vein” had incapacitated Wilfred from his chosen career: none other lay open but Hartlebury and its brewery. Indeed, it was well for everybody concerned that Wilfred had had to go into that business: for the father died comparatively young, six years before the opening of this story.

If the elder generation of Ingrams had had to step down (as it were) into the rank of the industrial professions, they had at any rate chosen a good moment for doing this. The fifties and sixties were golden years for the middle class. With loss of political power began to come diminution in the profits of industry. Trade Unions were organised and extended. The law of conspiracy was revised. Capital, being thus walled in by Labour, began its internecine battle, unrelenting competition. The history of the last half century might be read in the stones (or bricks) of The Mount. Its stones were but an appearance made by the stucco. Solid prosperity had put Wilfred Ingram the elder in possession of the house and its grounds. Industrialism had spread all around it lanes of squalid-looking, blackened houses. Over-production had now engendered the war of capital with capital, in which many solid businesses went down and were heard of no more. But the survivors were the stronger for the fight. Their ambitions rose higher. Those white houses

which we have said rose on many a hillside out of the blackened mass were not now good enough for the more successful manufacturers and for the coal-owners of the neighbourhood. One by one the manor houses within a radius of five or six miles had fallen into their hands, as has been said anon. These folk formed a county aristocracy after its fashion. Those who were relegated to houses like The Mount did not belong to it, or touched its outskirts merely. And as "nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so," to Wilfred Ingram his position in respect of all those blackened houses round him was far from glorious and aristocratic. The vulgarity of life amid which he lived was not less than a torment to him; and—though he would have died rather than confess it, even to himself—the last sting lay in the fact that he, an Ingram, was not considered good enough for the parvenus who composed the bulk of county society. Strange sufferings! which are known in their fulness in our blessed isle alone of all on which the sun shines down: "From his pride," says Michelet (with perfect truth), the Englishman "*souffre énormément. Et il met encore de l'orgueil à cacher ses souffrances.*" 'Twas so with Wilfred Ingram. Almost every greeting he exchanged on his way to his office in Wharf Street, Hartlebury, was a pin-prick of moral sufferance. Yet 'twas a sufferance also that these greetings were not more frequent and more hearty: for Wilfred was respected but not popular: whereas his father had been both. In candid moments Wilfred would admit that it was a touch of bad breeding in him that he should mind "vulgarity" so much: it had run off his father like water off a duck's back. The elder Ingram somehow seemed to look upon his neighbours, all the people of Hartlebury and the outlying parts, as a joke.

Why, thought Wilfred, could not he take things in that way? And in candid moments the son admitted it was because his mother did not quite come up to the Ingram standard. But, when Wilfred was less candid, he attributed the difference to the fact that he had, at all events for a few years, while in the army kept the society of gentlemen.

And yet Wilfred's feelings in all this business were not vulgar nor snobbish alone. If in all his walks and ways he seemed to himself to be hemmed in by a sea of foes or aliens, it is quite true that these commercial neighbours were alien to many of his instincts of delicacy and honour. They were not sensitive; and through their lack of sensitiveness they could hold their own against the class reckoned above them, those that remained of the county magnates and the old squirearchy. Their view of life was simple and plausible: so that they won over the county magnates—a great part at least of the younger generation—to this simple view—that enjoyable things are to be enjoyed: that cakes and ale are cakes and ale, and ginger hot in the mouth, all the world over. What was there to set against that view of things? The old-fashioned folk talked of the "duties" of a county aristocracy: had they been pressed to formulate them, those duties would have turned out to be largely the duty of forcing other people to do what the county magnates thought they ought to do. Whether that were indeed a "duty" or no, the power to its performance had been filched from them. So what duties now remained? It is not as if the "new men" were illiberal. They subscribed freely to charities: many had more power to set going schemes of benevolence than had those they displaced, in part through readier command of cash, in part through

an organising capacity. They were as quick to "plank down" money as another, and had more to "plank down."

What then was to urge on the other side? Wilfred Ingram, who was not ready of speech, would have found nothing plausible to urge. What just grievance had he against the young Thicknesses and Cators that they hobnobbed with old Harpur's sons, the 'coalowner? Old Harpur was scarcely presentable. But his sons were all right. They had been to Eton: one was in a cavalry regiment; another had taken his degree at Oxford, and very likely knew as much of polite letters as Wilfred himself. It would have comforted the latter no whit if someone had put under his nose a famous passage of Burke:—

"The age of chivalry has gone," wrote that Tyrtaeus of "Parliament House"—"that of Sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone. It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness."

A certain air of rhetoric about this passage would have prevented it from carrying conviction to Wilfred's heart; and may easily have the same effect on us. And yet it is very apt. For what Burke beheld with an eye almost prophetic, the slow revolving years have brought about. "The glory of Europe is extinguished for ever." "The age of chivalry is gone: the age of *calculators* has succeeded." 'Tis very apt to anyone who knows in what

greatness and glory consist. Wilfred could not have told in words what were that greatness and that glory which are gone. Old Mr. Cator of Touchet Park could not have told; nor said what part therein had played his order now threatened with extinction. Least of all could he have imagined how the intimacy between his grandsons and the young Harpurs, the coalowner's sons, might wound, not in petty sentiments alone, a brewer in Hartlebury-on-Dane.

CHAPTER V.

ON the Sunday night at supper—it was supper on Sundays—Rudolf said: “Minnie Vaughan tells me you’ve asked her to lunch.”

“Yes; I thought you would like to meet her. Oh, you’ve been to see her, then? Where does she live? I wrote to the works,” Janet answered.

Rudolf had not accompanied the party to morning church. The three of The Mount made the reflection that apparently Miss Vaughan did not go to church either.

“Of course I’ve been to see her. And on Saturday I arranged about painting that chap. He seemed a bit surly at first. I fancy he doesn’t like you,” Rudolf said to Wilfred.

“Well, I don’t like him,” said his cousin.

“Oh, I got on with him all right after a bit,” said the other carelessly.

“When do you begin painting him? How long shall you take?” asked Janet.

“Next month. How long I shall take—how can I tell?”

"Next month! Oh, I thought you'd begin to-morrow or next day . . ."

"Oh no. By the way, I must go back to-morrow—to-morrow morning."

"Not to-morrow morning. Why, I told you your friend is coming to lunch."

"Can't help it. I find I must go up in the morning. There's a good train at 10.50, isn't there?"

"Oh dear!" said Janet. "What shall I do? She'll be so disappointed."

"No, she won't. I had a good long talk with her this morning while you were in church. She told me you'd asked her. I fancy she's in rather a funk, though she won't show it, you'll see. Oh, she's a nice little girl, very."

"Have I got to entertain her with no one to help? And I've asked the Armitages. That's worse. Wilfred?"

"No, I can't come home to lunch," Wilfred said.

"I daresay Mr. Armitage won't come," Janet said.

"If you've asked his wife, I should think probably not," her brother answered sardonically.

"He's an extraordinary man. It does seem a shame he should have such a nice wife and not appreciate her a bit."

"He won't come because you've asked his wife?" Rudolf queried. "Well, it must be a frightful bore to be always *tête-à-tête* with the same person. If she were an archangel I couldn't stand it."

"Do you mean that, really? But why does anyone get married, then, according to you?"

"Because they don't reflect, luckily," Rudolf answered, with one of his curious chuckles.

"Perhaps you're afraid of not reflecting in the case of Miss Vaughan?"

A certain pink glow did cross Rudolf's face.

"Anyhow, it's not on that account that I'm going up to London to-morrow," he said.

"Then she is, pretty?" Janet asked.

"Oh yes. Some people think her awfully pretty."

"Well, what do you think?"

"I've *not* reflected on that point," once more he chuckled.

"Wilfred, I'm sure you could get off early just once to see Rudolf's beauty."

But even when Janet said it she pretty well knew that this sort of talk was rather the thing to put her brother off coming.

"Oh, well, if she knows Rudolf's going," Wilfred said.

"I don't know that she did know that. But I suppose when I stay with her employer . . ."

"You're going to stay with Mr. Robertson?"

"Of course I must stay with him to paint him. I believe you think painting's much the same thing as photography."

"We're not so ignorant as that," said Mrs. Ingram, with a certain dignity.

On Wilfred's ear one sentence had grated unpleasantly: "When I stay with her employer." It offended a natural chivalrous sense in him.

When Miss Vaughan did appear, Janet was rather glad things had turned out as they did. "Wilfred wouldn't like that," was Janet's first thought, when Rudolf's "little girl" took off her hat—which she did as if it were a

matter of course—and displayed a mass of short hair curling about her head. The hair was not a pretty colour either, but like faded straw. Miss Vaughan's figure, too, looked stumpy and inelegant. That was because Janet was quite unused to the manner of dress of the art-student. There was no significance in any of these things, nor in the air of docile meekness with which the stranger presently ate her lunch, hardly contributing anything to the talk, and answering questions with a monosyllable. And perhaps Janet would not have been much struck by the face, if she had not seen its beauty reflected in surprise on Beatrice Armitage's. (The husband had answered the prediction made about him.) But the best which the two inhabitants of Hartlebury could do, produced small effect in unsealing Minnie Vaughan's lips; and Mrs. Armitage had to go away directly after lunch. Minnie's eyes, however, had gone everywhere. It is possible she had not often lunched in a room so impressive as this.

"If she feels very shy, perhaps she'll go too!" Janet reflected. But she knew that with some shy people it is as difficult to go away as to come. And she did not wish the visit to come to an end.

"Will you excuse me one minute?" she said to her guest, and went out with Beatrice to the door.

"My dear Janet," the latter said, "what a lovely girl that is!"

"Do you think so?"

"Of course I do—who could think otherwise? She's like a quattrocento angel."

"Quattrocento—what's that?"

"The early Italians—before Raphael, you know."

"No, I didn't know." And a certain distress swept

over Janet's face. "There are such a lot of things I don't know."

"There are a lot of things you *do* know. That otter, for instance."

Janet's face cleared. "Yes, I daresay I know more about the country than you do."

"I do so enjoy making an expedition with you. When shall we have another?"

"Wednesday, if you like, or Thursday."

"Not Wednesday. You're coming with me, you know, to the Prisoners' Aid."

"And Thursday, I forgot, I have some visiting to do."

"Yes; I forgot your duties to the church. It's not fair carrying you off to my things too."

"You don't," and Janet hesitated a moment, "care about those things, I know. But I'm a churchwoman."

"Well, so am I. Robert never goes to church if he can help it. Then most men don't, do they?"

"Oh, I hope so."

"I mustn't keep you. Go back to your beauty. Good-bye." And the two friends kissed.

Janet herself was rather silent when she came back to Miss Vaughan. She never parted from Beatrice Armitage without a pang of commiseration and the sense how little she could do to lessen the tragedy which hung over the other's existence, which she never spoke of; yet her eyes spoke of it eternally.

There were two things which prevented the Armitages from leading a cat and dog life. The first, that it takes two to make a quarrel; and Beatrice would not consent to be the number two. The second was that the "professor" was really interested in his work. But he had a vile temper, and except as a worker was profoundly selfish.

Janet could not immediately shake off the thought of these things. They gave her a certain commiseration for her visitor—merely by transfer. And she was more glad than before that the latter showed no signs of leaving. Janet proposed that they should go out: it was unusually bright and warm. Minnie enjoyed the garden and the flowers with the same mute placidity. Not, however, that she expressed any dissatisfaction with her surroundings in Hartlebury.

"I like my work," she had answered to Janet's enquiry.

"It must be very interesting," the other said gropingly.

"Oh, I like it very much. . . . Only I wish . . ."

"Wish what?"

"I wish . . . rather . . . there was always someone here to criticise one and give one a hint—like Rudolf."

Janet started at the Christian name.

"You know my cousin very well, then?"

"Oh no. But he's so clever. Several there thought him almost a master."

"There? At Munich you mean?"

"Yes, of course." But here she stopped dead once more.

"Did he criticise you the other morning?"

Minnie laughed—a silvery pleasant laugh. Janet heard it for the first time.

"Yes. . . . It isn't the things he does that I want to do." (She was coming out a little at last, her hostess reflected.)

"What do you mean by the things he does?"

Minnie Vaughan looked up in surprise, but said nothing.

"I mean," Janet said, feeling with a certain irritation

the absurdity of her question, "he told me he was chiefly doing portraits—and of course he's going to do Mr. Robertson."

Miss Vaughan gave the faintest start: Janet could not guess why.

"Didn't you know that?" she asked.

"Oh yes," answered her companion, and no more.

Janet in a rage determined she would try no more. But when the guest, evidently in perfect content to leave the matter there, asked what "that plant was" (this was in a greenhouse, and the plant was a Poinsettia), the other's curiosity got the better of her temper.

"You don't want to do portraits?"

"Oh yes, I should like to, if anyone would sit to me on Sundays."

"On Sundays! I don't think anybody would sit on Sundays."

"I couldn't any other day, as I work all day at the factory or design at home."

"I wish," said Janet almost crossly, "you'd explain what it is you want to do which you said my cousin" (she would not say Rudolf) "doesn't do."

"Did I say that?"

"Of course you did, two minutes ago. You can't have . . ." (Janet checked her temper, and did not add "forgotten.")

"Perhaps I was thinking of Böcklin."

"Böcklin—who's Böcklin?"

This question seemed really to startle the other. She looked up with round eyes. But even then she said nothing.

"I remember Rudolf mentioned his name." (Rudolf had slipped out this time.) "He's a painter, I suppose?"

"Don't you know Böcklin? I thought everybody even in England knew Böcklin." (The "even in England" was rather exasperating.)

"Well, perhaps painters do. But *even abroad* I suppose everybody isn't a painter."

The shaft quite failed to penetrate. Miss Vaughan merely returned to her attitude of interested observation. And with Janet again curiosity triumphed.

"Did you work with him?"

"Work with him? I? Oh no! He criticised us once, I remember."

"Is he very clever? Is he better than R—my cousin?"

"Oh, he's dead." And Minnie Vaughan stopped dead herself at this information, as if the matter was ended.

It was maddening. But the more Janet was defeated the more she was determined not to give in. She felt that her temper or her obstinacy was playing fast and loose with her taste and her manners, when she began on another tack.

"My cousin, Rudolf, we'd not seen him for years, before he came here this time. He's rather a puzzle, don't you think?"

Minnie Vaughan looked at her a little surprised, a little considering.

"No, I've never thought so."

"Do you know him pretty well? Have you seen much of him?"

"N-no. Not more than we used to see of any of the others. He was only at Munich one year after I came. I mean only one winter."

"But you know . . . he would go off this morning though I told him you were coming to lunch. Why shouldn't he have stayed?"

"But why should he? He had work, I suppose."

"But you know"—Janet laughed—"you won't mind my saying it—you are very pretty. Most people" (she hated herself for the impertinence of her speech, but the impermeability of the other justified it in some measure) —"most people would have put off their work one day."

"Oh, *that*," said Minnie Vaughan, but she coloured slightly. Then she added, with perfect *sang froid*, "No doubt he has a mistress."

"A what?" said Janet, panting for breath.

"A mistress," said the other, with absolute calm.

"Used you to talk of such things at Munich?" Janet asked severely.

"Yes; I don't know why not," the guest said. But she looked a trifle scared at the severe face of the other.

"Well, we don't," said Miss Ingram. And in an icy way she turned the talk on to quite different subjects.

When her guest was gone a revulsion of feeling came to Janet. Conscience told her that all the fault had been on her side: that it was the grossest impertinence to have dragged in Rudolf and his possible sentiments as she had done: that she would never have dreamt of so doing, but that this girl was evidently so differently brought up from all others; that she had forced out of her that other display of unconventionality, and then taken offence thereat. And this girl was a stranger among strange folk, perhaps without a friend anywhere. Oh, was it not monstrous? Such a lovely face, now it came back to memory—as of an angelic visitor. Janet was not an idler; she had her charities, her church work and such-like activities; and a good deal of the housekeeping fell upon her. But there was no stimulus of necessity: never had she heard the

growl, however distant, of that symbolic wolf. Neither the less nor the more of activity would make a pin-point's difference in her comfort. But this other one was fronting the world alone.

What she had done now seemed enormous to Janet. She even shed some tears over it. But there was a sort of sweetness in this sting of self-reproach. For pity is akin to love. And women have the faculty—and exercise it often—of falling in love with a member of their own sex—a passion purely romantic, but of precisely the same kind that a man's might be.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Janet came down again her mother was in the drawing-room (Mrs. Ingram never shared any meals but tea and dinner with her children): it was tea-time, and Wilfred by exception had come home to tea.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked his sister.

"Nothing."

"You've been sticking your head in water."

Janet had to invent a lie. "Y-yes. I got all over dust. I was taking some things from a top drawer and a cloud of dust fell over me."

"Yes. Let me see . . . you had that girl of Rudolf's to lunch?"

"Yes. And she's very pretty—though you wouldn't think so, perhaps."

"That depends. I think as a matter of fact I probably met her coming down the hill."

"With a brown dress and hat?"

"If you call it a hat."

"Well, I call it a toque as a matter of fact. But did you notice her face?"

Wilfred, strange to say, even coloured a little and felt that he had done so. "I noticed it to some extent. And what about the professor?" (Mr. Armitage was as often spoken of as "the professor" as Wilfred was as "the captain." But neither he nor his wife gave countenance to the name.)

Janet was not altogether deceived. "No, he didn't come—as you said. Beatrice admires Miss Vaughan immensely. She says she's like an angel by . . . I forget his name. But I think I remember the picture—the Angel and Mary—Lip . . ."

"Lippo Lippi, I suppose," Mrs. Ingram broke in, in her rather fatigued, rather superior manner. She often astonished her children by these sudden exhibitions of knowledge, especially in matters of art. She had painted herself as a girl—copied quattrocento figure in water-colour, under the inspiration of Ruskin. But as they interested nobody, she gave it up. "There's an Annunciation of his in the National Gallery. There's a copy of the angel in my room."

"Oh, I'll go and get it," said Janet, suddenly brought up by the recollection how entirely they ignored her mother's achievements.

"You can after tea if you like," said Mrs. Ingram. "But finish your tea first."

"Rudolf got off all right, I suppose?" Wilfred asked. "He's a queer fellow, isn't he?"

"Yes; but I should think he's clever."

"Uncle Johnnie" (that was the bachelor uncle, joint-executor with Wilfred of the father's will)—"Uncle Johnnie told me he's considered clever. He's supporting himself

now. But he cost them a lot of money at one time. . . . Fellows like that," Wilfred went on, "they're clever in a way of course. . . ."

"I don't think he's well-principled," Mrs. Ingram put in. "And he has no manners."

"Oh, they always take up a lot of ideas they don't believe in."

"You mean about his politics," Janet said. "And you too, I suppose, mother?"

"My dear, I should go out of the room if he said some of those things again."

Janet would not have liked to report all Rudolf's talk to her that morning before he left. Evidently things had to come out with him without respect of persons. It seemed marvellous that those two types, Rudolf and her brother, should be near akin. And with these thoughts came back to her mind Minnie Vaughan's amazing "No doubt he has a mistress!" If Wilfred or her mother had heard that!

"And about this scenery being so good to paint—Hartlebury and the chimneys," Wilfred laughed. "Of course that was all side."

Janet acknowledged to herself that there was no knowing precisely how much Rudolf meant of what he said. But she did not altogether endorse her mother's or her brother's views.

Rudolf's visit had, she felt somehow, been eventful to her: yet it was impossible clearly to see why. The fact that he was so unlike the rest of the family—that was surely not enough to make him interesting? Nor the fact that he came and went showing a minimum of interest as to their doings—there could be no claim in that. If he said new and sometimes extravagant things, he did so

with so little effort to say them persuasively, that one could have no assurance of his sincerity. He appeared good-tempered: could one assert anything else? And even in a cousin it was an objection his being so plain. And yet, Janet felt, something still remained—a something as of a breath of keen air through the door of a conservatory.

Janet went upstairs and brought down the picture—rather a clever copy, but to a judging eye bereft of that touch of vitality which would give it value. Neither of the children were capable of detecting the want. But Wilfred rather ostentatiously refused to give it any minute attention.

“Ah, that’s by—who did you say?”

“Filippo Lippi,” Mrs. Ingram explained.

“Yes; I think I remember the head at the National Gallery. Very well done, mother. Very well done indeed. We ought to have it down here.”

“You have two saints of mine—that’s by Ambrogio di Predis and that’s by Botticelli,” Mrs. Ingram said, nodding towards two pictures on the opposite wall. She had blushed a little at the compliment from her son, the only person (even including her late husband) from whom she valued a compliment.

“Shall we leave it here then?” Janet asked. And then she added with a spice of mischief: “It will be like having the company of Minnie Vaughan. It *is* like her: I see what Beatrice meant.”

Wilfred frowned; but he likewise coloured once again.

“I don’t know your friend yet,” Mrs. Ingram said, with a sort of hauteur.

Janet left the picture standing on another table for the future to decide its fate. And from the corner of her

eye she watched to see how often Wilfred's strayed in that direction.

It was not long afterwards that Miss Vaughan came to tea at the Armitages. These lived in the town itself, but in the best part of it, North Bank, remote from most of the factories and raised above all the rest of Hartlebury, so that it can see many windings of the Dane among water-meadows, after it has freed itself from the neighbourhood of habitations. True, those water-meadows are rather sorry ones—their hedges are blighted by smoke from the town or one of the overlooking pits outside it. But on a breezy April afternoon such as this was the water flashes pleasantly in the sun. Minnie Vaughan turned back a moment to look at these things as she stood on the gravel terrace which is common to all the houses on North Bank. For these have no *vis-à-vis*. She looked toward the meadows and the bare hills above them, unusually free of smoke, and then toward the woods still farther westward, over which the sun hung—still high. 'Twas not much in her nature to imagine future dangers or complications or to guard against them. But that is not saying that she was an immovable optimist. On the contrary, she would often feel as if dangers which she could not foresee were relentlessly bearing down upon her. And that is how she felt now.

She was the first guest to arrive. But Janet Ingram was almost upon her heels.

"I waved to you," she said to Minnie, "when I saw you had stopped. But I suppose you were looking too far away. . . . It is a very delightful view if you don't know it well. But it's almost exactly the same as ours."

"Oh, it's better," Minnie cried.

"I'm glad you think so, Miss Vaughan," the hostess put in; "I shall quote you as an authority, as you're an artist."

"I suppose it's a matter of taste," Minnie said, with her usual simplicity.

"I confess I should like to blot out the town," said Mrs. Armitage. "And I do think you have the advantage there," she added to Janet.

"Ah!" said the artist, "that's just what I like."

"How odd! Rudolf said something like that too." But Janet did not feel interested in pursuing the subject. She was curious whether Wilfred was coming. "You asked my brother, didn't you?" she said to her friend. "I hope he'll come. . . . You've not seen my brother," she went on to Minnie. "I must tell you he's not a bit like Rudolf."

"Oh no; I know."

"You *have* seen him then?"

"Yes; I saw him when I was coming down Mount Hill from your house."

"But how did you know it was my brother?"

"I asked somebody."

Both Janet and the hostess inwardly gasped. But the latter said hastily, "Here is your brother;" and a minute later Wilfred was in the room.

Janet wisely washed her hands of the introduction. It was left to Beatrice Armitage. And both these two (rather perhaps in thought than actually) stood aside to watch the issue.

"As a matter of fact we've met before." Wilfred was shaking hands with the stranger.

"I know," said she.

"Well, I hope you've not encountered any more drunken beggars?"

At that moment Dr. Armitage and Dr. M'Kenzie—a genuine practitioner, the latter—came into the room together. Beatrice turned to speak to the second, Wilfred to the first.

"What was that about beggars?" Janet asked Minnie.

"Only that he—your—there was a man that was begging* from me that day. I daresay he was rather tipsy."

"And my brother sent him away?"

"He stopped me from going on—the man did, I mean—and I had to cross the street. . . . Yes; then your—Mr. Ingram told him to go away, and he went."

"And then you asked somebody who he was?"

"Yes."

"That's so like Wilfred. Of course he said nothing about that: though he said he had met you."

"Oh!" was all that Miss Vaughan said; but she coloured.

"I mean he guessed that it was very likely you, as he knew you'd been to lunch with me."

After that Janet saw Miss Vaughan give a long unembarrassed look at Wilfred, whose face was only seen in *profil perdu*. There was a something of sentiment in her look. But nothing of particular interest happened at that afternoon tea.

If both this time and at her lunch at The Mount Minnie Vaughan had been so unexpansive and seemingly so tongue-tied, it was not precisely shyness that kept her so. A mixture between curiosity and laziness had been the cause of her accepting Miss Ingram's invitation. But she had counted on Rudolf's being there; and that would have made all the difference. Now she realised that she

had all alone entered the lion's den; and that retreat would not be easy. The "lion's den" for her, as for Rudolf, would mean any respectable middle-class household. She had always meant to keep clear of all such; she had thought she might yield that once to curiosity. And Minnie had on some matters an incurably lazy mind that would not look forward or calculate chances.

So much for the first visit; but what excuse was there for the second? A leaden sense that she was committing a folly which might have terrible results weighed upon Minnie's thoughts during that moment when she turned and saw the sunlight flashing on the water-meadows. The memory of that vision long remained with her. And as it often happens in such memories that like dreams they go by contraries, and the gaiety itself of some scene seems in the recollection to contain a hidden menace; so it was now. This second invitation—what was her motive for accepting that? Curiosity again, she said. Call it so; but it was of a new kind. Curiosity to see again the man who had come forward so promptly to her assistance, before indeed Minnie herself had realised that any assistance was needed. Alas! what might *that* portend?

CHAPTER VII.

THE Hartlebury Unionist Club, which stands at the corner of Deacon Street and Bridge Street, had been founded more through the exertions of the elder Wilfred Ingram than of any other citizen of the place. It was first of all the Hartlebury Conservative Club. In those early days it was like a forlorn hope or a palace of lost causes, for the town seemed then incurably Liberal. But

in 1886, Hartlebury, like a vast number of Midland seats, followed the lead of Birmingham and its energetic fulmineous member, into the Liberal-Union ranks. Since then it has wavered between the two parties.

The club was one of the ordinary houses of the town. That is to say, it was not of the extremely humble order of tenements of which mostly consisted the attached villages now drawn into Hartlebury, as well as those lanes—what we have called the tentacles—which had drawn them in. *Those* were two-storeyed dwelling-houses in which the outer door led directly into the sitting-room, call it kitchen or parlour which you please. Its floor was generally tiled. *This* was a “lobbied ’ouse.” The first steps in the social scale of Hartlebury lay between those who lived in a “lobbied ’ouse”—a house with a passage to the front-door—or if need be had been born or had a sister or a cousin who lived in a “lobbied ’ouse,” and those whose experiences had never risen above the ordinary workman’s tenement. As a rule, of course, “lobbied ’ouse” tenants were of a different class from ordinary labourers. They were “jacket men”—that is to say, overseers or managers, “them as can work without fetching off their jackets”—at the lowest gang-masters: ordinary working-men aspired not to lobbied houses. The streets of the town alone, not even the outlying lanes of Hartlebury itself, were chiefly made up of these larger tenements. But of course in superior quarters still—such as North Bank was—the houses much surpassed the limits of this distinction.

The house in Deacon Street was originally an average house. On the right of the door stood the secretary’s room—seven feet odd by six—which had ventilators in both door and window. The window had a wire screen

bearing the name of the club—"Hartlebury Unionist Club." The next door in the lobby, the only other of this ground-floor, brought one to a room of much more importance. It had been built out to fill most of the back garden or patch of land which appertained to No. 14 Deacon Street. It was now some twenty-two feet long. It was entirely lit by a skylight over the new portion, which portion too had an area where the kitchen was placed. In this large room a *table-d'hôte* lunch was served every day for a shilling, which was a little below cost price for a meal which made a sufficient midday dinner to all but the heartiest appetites. The room answered many other purposes. Here were held the general meetings of the club. The member for Hartlebury, when a Unionist—he was not one at the moment—addressed a select number of his constituents here—at a complimentary luncheon or a smoking concert. And here were given various other kinds of entertainment to support the Unionist cause in Hartlebury, to which the wives and daughters of members were bidden.

Over the entrance to the dining-room were drooped two Union Jacks. It is not likely that even with familiarity any member of the club, as he passed in and out, was quite unaffected by the symbol. A glory lingered about the mere words "the flag." Wilfred Ingram for certain did not pass beneath the Union Jack without a conscious pleasure and pride and a very real sense of self-devotion. Such he felt to-day, a day in April, when only a sense of duty would have compelled him to come to lunch at the club-room. It needed such a sense to make Wilfred overcome his inward distaste to sitting down to the heavy midday meal cheek-by-jowl with the average type of member, though when he did come he was generally

treated as an honoured guest. But he forced himself to do this occasionally, and at any rate he could pride himself in being regular at the committee meetings. Among the average members this midday lunch was much prized. It was a distinct economy to the poorer; and was recognised also as an agreeable opportunity for social intercourse.

Mr. Robert Miller—the younger—architect and surveyor, who was the honorary secretary of the club, greeted Mr. Ingram with becoming *empressement*—out of which Wilfred never got any real satisfaction, though he would have resented the lack of it.

“Good day, Captain Ingram. Are you come to have a bit of lunch? I’m very glad to see you, sir,” he said, shaking hands. Several other members did the same; or acknowledged Wilfred’s presence by a curious movement of the head between a nod and a bow, which is a characteristic form of greeting in the Western Midlands. For they were seated at the long table. One broad-backed, grey-haired man at the upper end had not yet noticed him. Mr. Miller hastened to bring this one as it were into line.

“Will you sit ’ere, Captain Ingram? There’s a place ’ere between me and Mr. Swift. Swift!” (this was to the broad-backed man), “here’s Captain Ingram come to have a bit of lunch with us. Make a bit o’ room, will ye, though ye’re not such a little ’un.”

Mr. Swift got up, wiping his mouth as he did so, to shake hands with Wilfred, also impressively.

“No; you’re right, I’m not such a little ’un,” he said, not being able to think of a repartee. “Well, Mr. Ingram, I’m very glad to see you here. . . . We must keep the cloob going, the coolours flying, y’ know.. We don’t know

how soon we may be having an election in 'Artlebury, y' know."

"Oh, not yet. There won't be a dissolution . . .," Wilfred began.

"Ah, but I'm not speaking of a general election, Captain Ingram. 'Aven't you heard anything about Pender?"

"No."

"I wouldn't say much about that jest yet," Mr. Miller put in.

Mr. Swift nodded solemnly and raised his eyebrows. He lowered his voice a little. Not the less, plenty of the other lunchers beside Wilfred might, had they been listening, have heard him.

"No; we moosn't talk mooch at present. Mr. Miller could tell you more than I."

"Well," said the secretary, speaking very confidentially, "it's feared that Pender & Mowett'll have to go to liquidation." (The accent was strong on the middle syllable.)

"You don't say so? Then I suppose he would resign his seat?"

"Be bound, I should think," said Mr. Swift.

"I should think be bound to," said the secretary.

"Ah," said Wilfred, not knowing of any more enlightening remark to make.

But the prospect of a battle of some sort stirred his blood; though after all it would be a battle of words, a weapon in which he was no master. Still he would, he knew, give work to the cause of his party: that was much more easy to him than the daily labour which his private interests required. There would go therewith a sense of increased importance—and his position in the town yet counted for a good deal—and a sense of self-devotion to a "cause."

"Ow about the Unionist Association," Mr. Swift went on, partly to Wilfred and partly to Miller on Wilfred's other side. "I suppose it can't take any steps at present."

"No; I don't think we can at present," said Miller. (Wilfred realised that he had no ideas *pro* or *con* on this question.) "Though I've no doubt the other side know more than we do, which is natural. . . . I met Mr. Warthrop in the town yesterday. He'd just stepped out of his carriage. 'Well, Mr. Warthrop,' I said, 'these are quiet times for you and me.' And I just smiled at 'im. I think he knew what I meant." (Mr. Warthrop was Chairman of the Liberal Association and President of the Liberal Club.)

And so the conversation rolled on. To one or two other members of the club who had been brought to listen, Miller gave it a more general turn.

"We were talking of what Mr. Haslop's chance might be in the next election," he said.

The other party and its supporters came upon the tapis. Among the latter Mr. Hector Robertson's name could not fail to be mentioned. Robertson had, it was believed, ultra-Radical views. But the custom of separating the Labour vote from both the other parties was in its infancy as yet.

"'Ee's getting a quarrelsome sort of chap, I think," said Swift. "You wasn't there at the last council meeting, I think, Mr. Ingram?" (Only Mr. Swift and Wilfred out of the company present were members of the Borough Council.)

"No," said Wilfred. "What happened?"

"Well, I could hardly tell you." Mr. Swift put on an air of indifference, but his high colour had grown higher

still, and he fell into a more provincial language than usual nowadays with him. "He began of me—I dunno what about—something about overtime and sooch like. 'Ee was in my emply once, y' know."

"I know that."

"And I suppose it rankles with 'im. There are them as takes things that way."

Mr. Swift was usually a very silent member of the Town Council. Wilfred was glad to think that he would at any rate in voting have his support when he opposed any project of the Mayor's. For though they were professedly on friendly terms—and Mr. Robertson had sought to improve the occasion by his having agreed to sit to Mr. Ingram's cousin—there was really on both sides the sense of a natural antagonism. The worst part as regards Swift was that Wilfred knew that he was not reckoned by any means a model employer. Nor a model landlord either: for Swift had a street or two of workmen's houses in Hartlebury. Janet took more interest in these questions than she used to do; possibly that was on account of Beck, the senior curate, who was more or less of a Radical. Or it may have been the influence of Mrs. Armitage: which Wilfred would prefer. Anyhow, as between Robertson and Swift on such matters as overtime, unsanitary employment, unsanitary dwellings, Wilfred knew that both his sister and his sister's chief friend would be on the side of the Mayor. Was not Mrs. Armitage *his* chief friend too in Hartlebury, though they saw not much of one another?

Swift wasn't, as he would have expressed it, used to these new-fangled ideas that the longevity or otherwise of his hands and tenants was matter of particular interest to an employer or a landlord.

Another member put in a remark about Robertson—

"I'm keeping my eye on 'im, y' know. 'Ee's very overbearing, I find 'im. And I'm not sure that 'ee's as good as 'ee pretends to be."

What the speaker meant by "keeping his eye" on Robertson, Wilfred had no idea.

It was at the other end of Deacon Street, just as he was about to cross over to Wharf Street, that Wilfred Ingram almost ran against a figure dressed in brown. Though he was thinking of Swift and Hector Robertson at the time, he had a subconsciousness that the person was looking at him; and gaining complete self-possession, he discovered it was Miss Vaughan. He took off his hat, she who had already passed turned round, and they shook hands.

"You didn't recognise me," Wilfred said.

"Oh yes, I did."

"At any rate you were going by without speaking."

"I didn't know you wanted to speak."

How disconcerting her answers were! But for once in a way Wilfred savoured this taste of originality. And queerness has at least the advantage that it lingers in the memory. Several times on his way back to the brewery Wilfred meditated that insignificant phrase. The Roman Catholic Church stood opposite and it had a clock. Wilfred at the moment of parting from Miss Vaughan happened to notice that the clock pointed to 2.13. He then looked at his own watch.

Mr. Miller was highly gratified that Captain Ingram turned up again to lunch the day following. He set it down to interest in the new political situation; and in this he was in accordance with Captain Ingram himself, who

was careful to enquire if there was any fresh news. But how Wilfred explained to himself that when about to leave, finding by his watch it was only two o'clock, he took up for a minute or two a journal which was lying in the secretary's room: that is not so easy to say. For yesterday his talk with Swift and Miller had kept him unprecedentedly late. In any case he met the same brown figure in the same place. This time there is no doubt that the figure was watching—or watching for—his approach.

“Do you come this way every day?” he asked.

“No; only when I'm going to the works.”

(The word gave an unpleasant pin-prick to the hearer—Mason & Robertson's works.)

“I don't go on Fridays and Saturdays,” Miss Vaughan volunteered as they were parting.

“Oh, I . . .” Wilfred was going to explain that it was only very seldom that he went out to lunch at his club. But he realised that he was alone.

At least he was glad to think that next day was Friday. For he certainly could not go three days running. On Saturdays he lunched at The Mount.

Over the high wall which bounds one side of Wharf Street several chestnuts spread their branches. And as it was April still the leaves only just out kept a brilliant green. On the branch of one a robin was boldly singing. Everything spoke of spring and the awakening of the year, and not least (though deeply buried) to the consciousness of Wilfred Ingram. For at this season, as we know, all men's fancies are apt to turn to thoughts of love. But for women's fancies—what of them? Their feelings are supposed—young maidens', I mean—to be buried far deeper and to have far less power of self-

realisation. At any rate Miss Vaughan's were not so sunk in ignorance. The possible troubles which might come from the course on which she was embarked were too evident to be ignored altogether; but, ah me! were there not possible pleasures too?

The next week when Wilfred met Miss Vaughan again—and this time it was a pure accident and in a different part of the town—Wilfred was half pleased, half shocked when, after they had shaken hands, she said, "You asked me once at Mrs. Armstrong's what I meant by *ombres chinoises*; would you like to see how I've done them?"

"Y-yes, I should, very much," he said, with a moment's hesitation.

"I suppose you're busy now . . ."

"No, not parti . . ."

"Because we're only a minute from Coleherne Street, where I live."

"Now? Shall I come now, then?"

"Well, if you've got the time."

And hardly waiting for an answer, she continued her way to her lodging.

Wilfred, left one step in the rear, rejoined her in a moment. But he had not thought of any remark to make before they were in front of Minnie's door.

Her room was on the ground-floor: a tiny little lodging-house room, the almost squalor of which so impressed Wilfred that he forgot to take in many of the details. There was a flat sofa covered in chintz, and the chintz was rather soiled at the edges—that he noted, for on that he sat down. And Miss Vaughan, rummaging in a corner, brought out a portfolio. Thereupon she sat herself beside Wilfred in such fashion that, when open, the portfolio rested on both their knees.

It was done in a perfectly simple, almost business-like manner. Wilfred knew well enough that there were hundreds of men and women in all ranks of society to whom such juxtaposition—almost strangers though they might be—would mean nothing. It must be so with his companion, who, so silent in company, must be shy by nature, who was perhaps quite unused to men. As with wild animals, all that should mean shyness of man, if it be raised to a certain degree, induces confidence; so no doubt it was with her. But Wilfred knew that it could not be so with him. His chivalry was not *naïveté*. No man is quite superior to a certain flattering sense of power when a woman even seems to make advances, or when, though only to the evil-minded, she has compromised herself the least bit in the world. These ideas would chase themselves in Wilfred's head to the tune in which now single figures, now crowds, and in one case a herd of deer were chased across the artist's designs.

Minnie spoke only enough to explain these last. And in some cases the explanation was very brief.

"This is Lenore. That's the first. . . . And this next."

He tried to concentrate his attention on the pictures. They puzzled him. He realised this much, that were he still a child they would have attracted him. But accustomed to judge almost all things by artificial standards, that did not strike him as a proof of merit. Then he noted verses printed in a very neat hand below the pictures. . . .

"They're for poems?" he asked.

"Yes; for ballads. I've got Tam o' Shanter."

"Tam o' Shanter—let me see, who is that by?"

"I don't know who it's by," said Miss Vaughan. "I've

never noticed. But it's in a book of ballads that I've got. I'll look if you like."

She made a half movement to get up; but it would have involved some displacement.

"Oh, never mind. . . . And I remember, it's Burns."

"Here it begins." She handed him the first drawing . . . and so on. "He goes to the churchyard, you know, and sees witches . . .," as she handed other pieces.

Wilfred read the verses as he passed the plates.

"And this is a Jagdlied—a hunting song," Minnie said, when that series was ended.

"Oh, you understand German. How clever," Wilfred said, more impressed by that than by her artistic skill. Yet he had got a sense of beauty from the pictures also.

At last he got up, feeling uneasily that he had stayed some time.

"They're wonderfully clever," he said. "Thank you very much for letting me see them."

"Oh, thank you for coming," Miss Vaughan said, embarrassed.

But he noticed that she made no effort to make an entertainment of it—to offer him tea, for instance, though he had now stayed three-quarters of an hour and it was half-past four. It *was* evidently an ordinary quasi-business transaction with her. That made him unwilling to hurry his departure.

"I tell you what," he said, "the person who would be interested to see these would be my mother. She understands all about art. . . . She's the only one in our family who's really artistic. . . . Though I always go to the Royal Academy," he added, with a modest pride.

Miss Vaughan bit her lip.

"Yes; when you come again to The Mount . . ." But

there he noted the size of the portfolio and stopped. (His mother here! H'm! It would be better to think it over.)

Then suddenly in an absence of mind (very unusual with him), Wilfred did an exceedingly rude act.

The portfolio had been shut. On its cover it bore in gilt letters the name "Minnie Vaughan."

"*Minnie Vaughan*," Wilfred repeated, with an emphasis of disgust on the first name. "Oh, I beg your pardon. I don't know what I was doing," he apologised, for once in a way quite confused.

"My *name's* Margaret," said the girl apologetically.

"It's frightful. I don't know what I was doing," Wilfred said, grasping her hand very warmly as he said good-bye.

What had he done? he thought, as he walked home. He must have caught the trick by infection. For certainly she had the gift of doing and saying things differently from other folk. And that made the deeds and sayings (even when seemingly insignificant) remain in one's mind. This three-quarters of an hour had not been like other three-quarters of hours.

Straightway came a thought which spoilt all his pleasure. It had been so simple, almost businesslike. But then, would not her actual business be done in the same way? And he saw her in fancy seated beside Hector Robertson, her "employer."

About six times a year it was that Wilfred allowed himself a few days in town. It was (as has been said) the only holiday he took, and the only time when he felt himself happy. On his next visit his steps ("A spirit in his feet," as Shelley has it) took him to the National Gallery and a comparison between his mother's copy of

that Lippo Lippi and the original. Even now he would not admit to himself that he had any other purpose. Certain, however, it is that a sigh escaped him unnoticed as he turned away, and that that night in his club bedroom, so utterly alone, his thoughts took a sentimental turn. The image of Julia Barnfield had been evoked vividly to memory last January and had troubled his thoughts since. Was he for ever to go on with this dreary existence? And for looks, Julia (perhaps even Mabel) was not in it beside that Minnie Vaughan (what a beastly name, Minnie!). If she would only dress decently! At all events she had no Staffordshire accent, nor a father who talked of "fetching off that coat."

Thus in Wilfred contended two influences: a natural refinement which set the pure contours of Minnie's face above the *beauté de diable* of Mab Barnfield; and the acquired vulgarity of those conventions which were his daily food.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WELL, you know, we couldn't have refused!" Janet said for about the hundredth time.

"I don't know why not!" Wilfred answered, not quite for the hundredth time, because on some other occasions he had said, "I *suppose* not, but I'm not sure."

He was in fact in an abominable temper which he could not quite account for to himself. There was first the alleged reason that he did not want to know that bounder Robertson. But since Rudolf the cousin was now staying at Panton Manor in order to paint the Mayor of Hartlebury, and as Wilfred had been in some degree in-

strumental in getting his cousin the job, having, as we know, asked him to stay at The Mount when the thing first came on the tapis, it was next to impossible not to dine there when asked.

It was annoying of Rudolf to have put off beginning for so long—all humbug probably his pretence of other work. The position of things had changed. It was no longer a secret that Pender, the sitting member, was going to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds after the adjournment of Parliament. So that he and Robertson were openly now in two opposite camps. Not much had been done yet on either side in the campaign itself. But at meetings of the Town Council now there were frictions between the two parties. Some houses in Byer's Buildings belonging to Swift had been unfavourably reported on by the Sanitary Inspector. Mr. Beck was keen on the matter: Robertson not less so. Both of these men, in quite different fashion, were ready speakers.' Swift, on the other hand, was almost tongue-tied. He looked for some support from his brother-constitutionalists. And in obedience to a sense of loyalty to his party, Wilfred had had to consent to be almost always beaten in argument and confuted in his facts, when the rebuilding of these houses came before the council. If it had been a personal matter he would probably have abstained from council meetings and let judgment go by default. In a matter of loyalty to another man he sacrificed himself. And the more he was beaten in argument, &c., the more Wilfred grew convinced of the righteousness of his cause. He had always been friendly with Beck hitherto; now he was very stiff. Janet once in ignorance introducing the matter of the Byer's Buildings houses, was so sent to the right-about that she kept dumb for the future.

The week before the Robertson dinner Wilfred had dined along with other members of the Unionist Committee at Mr. Thicknesse's house, Foljambe Priory. It was a bachelor dinner. Wilfred did not much care to accept this kind of invitation, but then the Thicknesse and the Cators were the only two families in the neighbourhood for whom (as not being in some way or other new) Wilfred had any respect. And after all, though one might discount the reasons for it, the urbanity and good manners which reigned at election time had their charms. Captain Thicknesse, the eldest son, was at home as it chanced. And as it chanced, too, he and Wilfred had played polo together ten years before at Peshawar. Possibly in other circumstances Captain Thicknesse would have been less ready to remember it. In these he remembered it with a good deal of cordiality; and he and Wilfred had a chat apart after dinner. This posed Wilfred very high in the estimation of some of the guests.

Another guest was the Rev. Percival Cator, Rector of Fellbridge, and father of the twins, Mabel Barnfield's pals. He was less congenial to the situation. A clergyman is, after all, a professional man—of a kind: he has to be all the more careful to mark the boundary which separates him from professional men who live in towns. Even when Mr. Percival Cator explained that Socialism was opposed to the will of God, Wilfred, though he approved the sentiment, did not heartily endorse the authority.

What a contrast this Robertson dinner would be! Confound Rudolf! Wilfred had really made several sacrifices for him, and the beggar was not the least likely to be grateful.

In addition to all acknowledged motives there lay the fact—Rudolf himself had mentioned it—that Miss Vaughan

was to be of the party. Wilfred knew he wanted to meet her. But he felt a dislike stronger than he could possibly have explained or indeed realised, almost an insane instinctive dislike, to meeting her under Robertson's roof: in the house of the man whom even Rudolf had once called "her employer." Wilfred was far yet from the point of confessing to himself that he was in love with "Rudolf's artist." 'Twas not certain that he would ever reach it. But he had already the dog-in-the-manger dislike that others should be about her; and an almost intolerable dislike that of these any should have less than his own natural and chivalrous respect for womanhood whenever seen. "Her employer!" Rudolf was a bounder; and 'twas hard to have to say that of an Ingram.

It was two days ago, when Rudolf came to The Mount in the afternoon, and his cousin came home earlier than usual to meet him, that Janet, partly by design, had introduced the subject of Minnie Vaughan. There was something then in Rudolf's tone which almost provoked Wilfred to outward rage and did make him sulk during the cousin's visit. Janet did not know what to make of the matter. She could not believe that Wilfred with his cut-and-dried ideas would really fall in love with Rudolf's artist. But then she partly realised that if his ideas seemed to be conventional, her ideas of him were perhaps conventional too. Of course she had the sister's instinct to keep things as they were. She herself had almost fallen in love with Minnie. Not less she felt she was a girl very difficult to understand. Oh, there were risks—risks innumerable. Even Beatrice, whose experience was much wider than Janet's, had begun to acknowledge something the same. Some of Janet's difficulties seemed none to Beatrice.

"Oh, lots of art-students are like that," Beatrice would say, brushing aside some point Janet had raised.

"Then do you begin to feel you know her?" Janet asked. "Because if you do . . ."

"No, my dear, I confess I don't a bit yet," the other answered, nodding her head in a significant way. "We've neither of us seen much of her. But still. . . . Anyway, she's an enigma to me in some respects as yet." And henceforward Minnie often went between these two by the name of the "Enigma."

Curiosity, however, is a mighty force, over-riding most resolutions of prudence. And the opportunity for watching both Wilfred and Rudolf in the presence of the Enigma could not be resigned. Nothing would have induced Janet to acquiesce in refusing the Robertson invitation.

"Do you remember this at all?" Janet said to her brother, when they stood within the folding doors of Panton Manor House. For (it has been said) Panton Manor had once belonged to forebears of their own. In Wilfred's earliest childhood old Tom Nettlethorpe still lived there. A remnant of its "park" remained in the shape of one grass field at the back: on this looked out the two best rooms of the house. On all other sides Panton Manor was surrounded by bricks and mortar.

"Very vaguely," answered the other, staring about. But moment by moment the place seemed to grow more familiar: the hall paved with a rough Bath stone: the gallery that overlooked it. The Nettlethorpe family had long since separated themselves utterly from Hartlebury. Only one of Tom Nettlethorpe's sons had been a success. The children of that one (a Q.C. himself) were many of

them in conspicuous positions: one was commanding at Malta: one was a High Court Judge in Calcutta. Old Tom's other sons had sunk out of sight in drink and squalid marriages. A certain echo of this ancient history seemed to come back to Wilfred and Janet from these walls. Then they entered the drawing-room.

"How should I feel toward her if I were a man?" Janet had propounded this question to herself often of late, but renewed it with more insistence during their drive—altogether through the dim town—to Panton Manor. And when she got into the drawing-room her eyes sought the Enigma to the exclusion of anyone else. The sight was so surprising that it was almost a shock. She had never seen the artist in evening dress. All stumpiness was gone from her figure; she looked taller than she had ever done before—quite thin and graceful. Her dress was of white cashmere cut square, with some gold braiding of a classical pattern (so Janet expressed it: it was in fact the "mæander" pattern), and her hair was entwined about a little circlet of gold round her head. The fashion of her hair-dressing was in fact copied from the head of Arethusa on the coins of Syracuse: Janet of course knew nothing of that. It is a sad fact that to-day this charming method of wearing the hair is more common among youngish charwomen and other members of the working-class than in any higher section of society. But even to-day that is chiefly noticeable in London. Ten years ago, though it had a certain suggestion of the working-class, it looked original and was certainly becoming.

As Janet took the girl's hand with a pressure of friendship and felt it returned, she determined that if a man did not capitulate at once—horse, foot, and artillery

—he must at least be quite ready to strike his colours. But then all the same she could not be quite ready for Wilfred to do so, and with that thought (for all flashed through her mind in a second) the warmth of her handshake relaxed. Miss Vaughan immediately perceived it. Into her eyes came the look, half-puzzled, half-forlorn, that had wrung Janet's heart the very first day of their acquaintance, and made her shed secret tears in the recollection. A tightness came in Janet's throat now. She set to work to ask a lot of questions, showing her interest in her friend: which Minnie answered in her usual clear unmoved way without the wistful look in the least going out of her face. Was it really on *her*, Janet's account, or because Wilfred had not yet come up to speak to the artist. Wilfred was talking to Miss Mason, whom nobody could find very entertaining—in rather an unusually interested way. Indeed he seemed suddenly to have recovered his good humour. He now shook hands with Minnie but did not say much, Janet observed. What she could not make out, though she looked narrowly, was whether Miss Vaughan were much affected by her brother's neighbourhood. As for Wilfred, she knew that he was either expecting to sit next Miss Vaughan at dinner or counting on a *tête-à-tête* with her after dinner. What the party was to be they could not yet tell.

Rudolf was in the house; but he had not yet appeared. He did so at this moment; and immediately after, Dr. and Mrs. Porter, the successors of the Barnfields at Brierley Lodge, rather red and full of apologies for their lateness.

Rudolf had gone straight up to his cousins; and for a minute these three Ingrams formed a group apart, watched in a deferential manner by the two Porters.

and hence with a certain attention by the rest of the guests.

Mr. Robertson, to make a diversion, gave his arm to Mrs. Porter.

"The dinner's ready, I know," he said. And then to Wilfred as he passed—"Will you take in my mother, Mr. Ingram?" But that was the only arrangement he made till at the door, recalled perhaps by a word from Mrs. Porter, he turned and said—"You must sort yourselves."

Janet glanced at Wilfred, who had turned back to take old Mrs. Robertson, an old lady in black silk with a cairngorm brooch and a strong Scottish accent, but with a kindly and rather intellectual face. Perhaps it subdued Wilfred: he looked less scornful than his sister had expected. They all got out of the embarrassing situation as well as might be. Dr. Porter proudly offered his arm to Janet. Rudolf, taking no notice of anyone else, secured Minnie; and the last two guests were Miss Mason, sister to the senior partner, and someone whom Janet had not heard the name of, but who looked like a gentleman. He was in fact a Mr. Alison, a revising barrister now in the neighbourhood. These two came in last of all. It hurt Janet to think that in the confusion she had been dragged in before this much older lady. Miss Mason seemed to have no theory or knowledge on the subject of precedence. Perhaps she thought it made her seem younger in years than Miss Ingram—to go in too with a young bachelor. She had, like all the older inhabitants of Hartlebury, a traditional respect for the Ingram family—who were universally admitted to be "high people." But she had also a modest consciousness of her own position. For her brother was now a magistrate for the county and lived six miles from Hartlebury.

CHAPTER IX.

THE places where the guests were to sit had been determined beforehand—possibly by Mrs. Robertson the mother: consequently they bore no relation to the order in which they had come in. Except, that is to say, in the case of Rudolf and Miss Vaughan, who were put at one end of the table, Minnie being next to the host. Miss Mason was on his opposite side, so that Mrs. Porter's seat was far away between the two Ingram gentlemen, and Janet had Dr. Porter on her left, and on her right the revising barrister,* whom she did not know. But as everything was out of rule, Mr. Alison wisely spoke to her almost immediately; and most of Janet's talk, except during long intervals when her *vis-à-vis* Mrs. Porter claimed her attention, was carried on with him. It was curious to watch Wilfred. He seemed really to have been in a fashion subdued by the old lady at his side. Mrs. Robertson said no great amount. But all the conversation she had she reserved exclusively for the guest who had taken her in, considering that seemingly a rule of good manners: save once when she wanted to ask her other neighbour a question, Mr. Alison might not have existed for her. And her deliberate Scottish accent made what she said last a long time. Mrs. Porter, if anything could have stopped the flow of her talk, would have been embarrassed for want of an auditor: on her other side Rudolf gave

what time he could spare from his dinner to Minnie Vaughan. Fortunately it was impossible to do anything which would have stayed Mrs. Porter's speech. She began across the table to Janet—

"You don't know anyone that would like a fox-terrier puppy, do you, Miss Ingram? There was one that followed me in the town, and I can't get to find out who it belongs to. I've advertised it in the *News*, but no one came about it. It looked most miserable when it came, but now we've washed it and fed it a bit it really is a very nice-looking little thing. . . . I suppose you don't either, Miss Mason?"

"No; I've given up having a dog," said Miss Mason from her corner. "They are such a bother in parish visiting. They will go after people's cats. And if I don't take it out with me, a dog would get no exercise at all and fall ill—most likely."

"Your Mr. Bedford," said Mr. Robertson, "he's very fond of coming down on me for subscriptions. I often wonder if it's the same with everybody."

"My Mr. Bedford," said Miss Mason; "he's *your* Mr. Bedford and everybody's Mr. Bedford."

"Well, you know, I'm a Presbyterian by rights, though I go to church here. Oh, I've nothing at all against Mr. Bedford."

"I should think not," said Miss Mason, half with enthusiasm, half with a sort of *espièglerie*.

"No; he's a very moderate man."

"Oh, I don't hold with the ritualists," said Miss Mason.

With Janet and her neighbour, the barrister, the conversation beginning with dogs branched off into kindred matters, relating to a household. But the talk which went on around him sank into Mr. Alison's ears and

germinated in its own queer fashion—in a mind (alike in that one respect to Mrs. Porter's) which had no reticences. He related presently how they—he and his brothers and sisters—had been brought up in a good deal of comfort. (His grandfather had owned land and been a laird of some sort, but got ruined in trying to work some iron-ore on it.) Then he told his neighbour how one of his sisters had gone over to New Zealand and married a man whom she would not be likely to meet in England (Mr. Alison did not say in so many words that he was the girl's social inferior, but evidently that was the case); and how much more real an existence she had there as a wife and mother than if she had remained in England. His talk was interesting and filled up some time. It was only on later reflection that Janet saw it might have a personal application. Mr. Alison had no such intent. Yet it was the observed contrast between Janet and Miss Mason and Mrs. Porter—he was rather short-sighted and could not see Minnie Vaughan distinctly—that had stirred these thoughts in his mind. Janet was not good-looking enough to get run after. A certain regularity of feature and a due proportion between forehead, nose, and chin belonged to all these Ingrams. Her hair, her eyes, and eyebrows were almost the same tint, a reddish-brown: her face was healthy enough, but had no beauty of colour; and though her figure was good and her features refined, that was not enough. As an heiress and in the hunting field she would have made a good show: hers was just the type of looks and build to be set off by a habit and an expensive mount. Perhaps if she had "gone in for" any specially mannish pursuit she would have gone down. As it was in her life at Hartlebury, which, if it did not eschew games—tennis and occasionally

golf when her brother played—was also a good deal taken up with housekeeping and certain works of charity, her chances (as Mr. Alison instinctively saw) were small. That is to say, if she insisted on looking out for a man quite her equal in rank.

Then Mrs. Porter claimed Janet's ear once more. To a lover of humanity Mrs. Porter's talk would always have been a refreshment: it was so natural, instinctive, sincere, even though it was not wide in its range and apt to centre round the concerns of Brierley Lodge. Mr. Porter's patients: the smell of carbolic and other "stuff": the chintz in their drawing-room down to her daughters' blouses (blawses)—it all came out without false shame or reservations. Even Rudolf seemed to be attracted. He turned in his curious way the whole of his body round toward the speaker and put in a remark or two.

"My two girls," Mrs. Porter explained to her neighbour, "can both wear each other's blouses. One of my girls found her blouse didn't go well with her cycling skirt, so she changed it with Gerty (that's my second daughter), and you'd never have told it wasn't her own. And the funniest thing is I can wear them too. I mustn't be very fat for my age if I can wear my daughter's blouses, must I?"

"You're just right," said Rudolf.

In truth Mrs. Porter was a very personable woman, though of the barmaid type, and looked ten years younger than her actual age.

As Rudolf replied to this remark, whether it only were that one of his dog-teeth gleamed beneath his red moustache, or that there was really some strange light in his eyes, for a moment to Janet watching he had a wolfish look.

Mrs. Robertson meantime with Wilfred was a hundred miles behind the rest of the talk. The initial question about a dog had turned her thoughts in that direction, and while Janet and Mr. Alison were in talk (Mrs. Robertson had interrupted the former once to be reminded of some Scottish term she had forgotten, whereby Janet discovered the nationality of her neighbour, which was scarcely betrayed by his speech), a waft of that story of how "under Providence" a collie had saved the life of the speaker's father came to their ears. Apparently since then the talk of these two had kept near the same subject. For in a pause after the blouse history which all the table could listen to, Wilfred's voice was solitary and distinct giving utterance to an unlucky sentence—

"He was lying quite quiet sunning himself in the sun."

"H'm, lucky he wasn't sunning himself in the moon," Rudolf looked up from his plate to say, and then became absorbed in eating once more.

Worse than that, Janet caught the faintest silvery laugh from Rudolf's neighbour. Wilfred only showed (to his sister's eyes), he had heard Rudolf's remark by turning an inch or two more towards Mrs. Robertson and continuing his narrative. But the host too had smiled.

Janet, with the memory of the wolfish look, could not help watching Rudolf at his food. She had at The Mount noticed what she called a Bohemian, what was sometimes a ravenous way Rudolf had of eating. And as Mr. Alison's talk of New Zealand and the colonies had now turned on the privations of colonial life, a flush of insight made Janet realise that at one time of his life Rudolf had not always eaten to his appetite, as the French say: had been without the means that is to say of satisfying his hunger. What had his life in Paris and Munich

been like, she wondered, with a fascination in the nebulous theme.

Janet now noticed another thing. Nearly all Mr. Robertson's attention was given to his right-hand guests, Miss Mason and Dr. Porter. But every now and then he spoke a word or two to Minnie Vaughan on his left—but always under his voice. And then Minnie would give a little start, and once she coloured a good deal. It looked more as if he were giving orders than making conversation. But he might also have been saying something undisguisedly complimentary. For Mr. Robertson's manners did not admit the finer shades.

Dr. Porter (as generally happens in a household) was silent in the proportion that his wife was talkative. But he had his hobby. He was something of an antiquarian, and made collections of stories and dialect phrases for the Folk Lore Society and for the Dialect Society. And somebody, it may have been the host by an unwonted display of tact, had got him upon the subject. Janet caught something about a peculiar method of greeting; but before the conversation had drifted well up to her it was peculiarities of dialect that were in question.

"Have you got 'scrawming' and 'sneaped'?" she asked her neighbour.

"Oh yes. 'Sneaped,' you know, occurs in literature. I've made a note of it but I forget where. I think it's in Shakespeare—'a sneaping wind,' something like that."

"I noticed a many expressions which seemed to me queer enough when I first came into the neighbourhood," said Robertson. "But that's twenty years since now; and they mostly seem so natural I expect I couldn't pick out the queer ones. There's one thing I remember though, because it was soon after I took up the pottery, and it

seemed so comical at the time. I came across two firemen who were quarrelling, and when I asked what was up, one said, "Ee called me all over the place for an Irishman."

"Yes, 'call'—that's a Staffordshire use," the doctor said.

"'And,'" he went on, "'Im's Scotch and that's a deal worse'! That he said tō me!" said Mr. Robertson, broadening his chest as if to take in a wind of patriotism. And being now in thorough "North British" vein, he went on—"Well, we're in a good minority here, Mr. Alison—two to three—for I'm sure you're North British too?"

"Not myself. Ours is a Scotch name, of course."

"'Scotch'—we don't say 'Scotch,' Mr. Alison, ye ought to know that." And the Mayor went on without a superfluity of tact—"Scotland's very well represented in your profession, Dr. Porter. M'Kenzie—I shouldn't wonder if he made a name one o' these days."

"Yes, he's very clever, M'Kenzie; and a very nice fellow," Porter said.

"There's another young Scots boy I've got my eye on who's going to do great things, you mark my words. His father's only a mining overseer. His name's Sutherland."

"Do you mean Willie Sutherland?" Janet asked.

"Do you know him then?" the host asked in his turn, almost as if he felt himself insulted.

"He was in my class at Sunday school."

"Oh, he's got far beyond Sunday school now," Robertson said, with a snort which gave a ring to the word "now." "He's a wonderful gift for mathematics. He passed first for his matriculation at London University, though he was only sixteen then. He'll graduate this next spring, and I wouldn't be surprised if he's top again."

I hope his father will send him to Cambridge. I shouldn't mind putting ma hand in ma pocket," he went on, broadening in his accent as the Scottish aura blew harder upon him. "For the honour of North Britain, Mr. Alison, though you, I can see, don't hold much by your origin."

"Oh yes, I do. I always consider myself a Scotchman—or Scottishman if you prefer it."

"Scoatt, man, Scoatt," cried Robertson, slapping his knee angrily. And then relaxing a little, he added, after a pause—"But what I donn't like is all these Sutherners coming up to Scotland to represent Scottish constituencies. . . . However, we've got upon politics now, and that won't interest the ladies. Mother!" he called out, and stood up.

("So," thought Janet, "it isn't that he's going to change the conversation, but that we've got to go.")

Mrs. Robertson, in obedience to the word of command, did what they would have had to wait long for her to do of her own initiative—she got up and went to the door. Here, however, she seemed to recollect herself, and waited so as to let her guests precede her. Mrs. Porter would not hear of such a thing. With some little difficulty and exchange of politeness the ladies of the party were got out of the room, and Dr. Porter shut the door on them.

CHAPTER X.

HECTOR ROBERTSON had made no attempt to go to the door to which he was nearest. Some shade of irritation might have been detected by the acute in the way he said to his neighbour—

"Sit down and make yourself comfortable and help yerself to a glass of this port. Westbrook recommended

it to me very highly. Ye've never thought of adding a wine business to your brewery, I suppose, Captain Ingram?"

Wilfred started. "No," he simply said in his astonishment at the question.

"It's wonderful what a good business Westbrook has got together. But of course there's a deal of money in the place, first and last," Robertson went on. (The Scot had largely disappeared from his speech.) "But, poor old man, he's breaking up, I fear. That's why I asked," he said. But the speech was in appearance addressed quite as much to Dr. Porter as to Wilfred. And then he harked back to an earlier train of ideas. "No, I don't understand my countrymen in that," he said. "Do you, Mr. Alison? You're a politician, I hope?"

"I'm not with either party," said the revising barrister.

"You'll not tell me you're a Tory?"

"No, I'm not a bit of a Tory."

"You should be a Socialist, man. That's what ye ought to be."

"That's what I am." Wilfred on the other side of the table made an exclamation.

"'Tis just bound to come, man. It's bound to come." Dr. Porter looked up scared and then across to Mr. Ingram.

"We're not bound to have Socialism," said Wilfred, "unless we lose all commonsense. Of course people are bound to fall over a precipice if they keep their eyes shut."

"Not on Salisbury Plain or on the Lincolnshire coast," said Rudolf, with his usual chuckle.

Mr. Robertson on his side laughed almost insolently. "I hope you're a Socialist, Mr. Rudolf." And then he said something about Socialism in Germany, and from

thence the talk branched off to other German subjects; for the Mayor of Hartlebury, it seemed, knew German and Germany well. The revising barrister got interested in this talk, and moved nearer to that end of the table, Dr. Porter changing places with him; for he felt strongly the impropriety of leaving the elder Ingram out of the conversation. He opened to Wilfred on a local question—the purchase of land for a sewage farm. Wilfred wished that the doctor had asked him something about India: for he felt the contrast between the subject they had chosen, and the wide regions which the other three men were covering. But by an act of will he turned his attention to Dr. Porter; and now a strange softening of his feelings toward his native town came over him. Yes, he might not know a lot of languages; but he was somebody at Hartlebury-on-Dane for all that. And did he not owe it to Hartlebury not to despise her local affairs, in which the happiness of numbers might be involved?

He was slow of thought, Wilfred Ingram, and despite his iron reserve with a sense deep in his being of impotence, of belonging to an age different from the one in which he lived. And this night too he had a sense that Rudolf's second treachery, that Robertson's insolence (so he saw it) had, as it were, curdled in his mind. They might have occurred over trifles; but they were not trifles.

At all events Dr. Porter effaced himself at the drawing-room door, and let Wilfred stalk gloomily in first. For a moment the injured man thought of cutting off his nose to spite his face, or punishing the innocent for the guilty. He thought, that is to say, of talking to Mrs. Porter and Miss Mason (Mrs. Robertson was behind a teapot), and leaving the two who were really on his side in the lurch. For Janet and Minnie Vaughan were together, "Maggie

Vaughan," let me say, for she had just announced to her friend that it was by that name she wished in future to be known.

Without doubt there was a wistful look in the latter's eyes, as she watched Wilfred come in. Good sense and common good feeling got the better of Wilfred's sulkiness, and as Janet almost immediately withdrew, he found life smiling on him once again, and the conduct of the outer barbarians forgotten.

Alas! but what significance had it? an inner voice said to him, with that crust over his feelings which it seemed as if no human power could break through. It was another self in him or some ancestral force which chained him to obedience to conventional rules and conventional ideas. There was another Wilfred struggling to break the bonds, a being to whom Maggie's special type of beauty, if you call it beauty, of good looks, if you call them only good looks, were fitted to appeal. The early Italian artists excelled not as painters, but as poets. Many a "Prix-de-Rome" of to-day, with the instinct and the intellect of an "Apache," might outdo them in technical skill, possibly even in the mere physical sensibility of the painter. But where will you get their sensibility of thought, made up of a certain childish innocence, a certain natural chivalry? Wilfred Ingram had something of the same feeling deep down in his nature; his instinctive attitude towards woman-kind was rather of this sort. It was indeed overlaid with any number of superficial absurdities and vulgarities; and when dress, sprightliness, fashion came to the front it died down or hid itself away.

He spoke to his companion of their chance meetings in the street, asked if she was likely to go to the Armitages'; and then realised what small opportunities he had

of getting to know this girl, how utterly at sea he was in trying to enter into her occupations, her interests. He had indeed seen her work, and been one other while at Coleherne Street. But Wilfred's knowledge on art things was next to none. But like the man whose brother played the German flute, he seized on the only thread that really connected him with art.

"My mother is very fond of pictures," he began.

His interlocutor shot him one rapid glance. She compressed her lips to keep grave.

"She's made a lot of copies from—from pictures in the National Gallery, and things like that. One's supposed to be like you."

"Like me! But I've never copied pictures."

"I mean it's a head that's like you—said to be; and I think it is rather. I went to look at the original in London."

"In the National Gallery?"

"Yes. Curious, I believe I've forgotten the name of the painter again. It begins with a P."

Miss Vaughan simply said nothing. She knew that she knew little or nothing of the old masters in London and did not in fact care much for old masters anywhere.

"Philippo" (so Wilfred saw it in his mind), "Philippo something. And it's a picture of an angel and a virgin."

Strange to say, Miss Vaughan had to compress her lips once again, but the next moment a cold perspiration broke over her (suppose she *had* laughed).

"Which am I?" she managed to say. Her voice trembled a little. The inclination to laugh was almost hysterical.

Wilfred relieved the strain by laughing himself. "You're the angel, I believe," he said. And then he tried to ask

after those curious shadow things which his companion had been doing. It would have been intolerably boring to Maggie to explain such pictures to Janet, for instance. But she knew that her companion's interest in her art meant something far better—interest in herself; so she felt no boredom in answering Wilfred's questions as she might have done if the speaker had been Janet. And once in a way Wilfred did not keep an alert eye upon appearances. People glancing sideways began to think it was a case: and Janet herself to cool in the friendliness, the almost passionate friendliness, she had nourished for the stranger. Though she was professedly talking dialect with Dr. Porter, her eyes would turn toward the artist: and once she saw a most strange and startled look, almost a hunted look, on the girl's face. This made her heart soften again. But Janet did not hear the remark which called it forth. Wilfred had said, almost as if talking to himself: "I wish you could get work somewhere else." It was a meditation aloud, expressive of his dislike to Robertson, and his eyes were fixed upon the ground as he spoke. He got no answer. When he looked up he did not see all that Janet saw, only the shadow of it passing away.

And there was another thing which Janet saw and Wilfred never guessed, namely, that her brother's talk with Miss Vaughan was throwing his host into a state of fidgets. He had been speaking to Mrs. Porter. Now he came and interrupted the doctor's talk with Janet: and yet it seemed much rather with the object of being almost within earshot of Wilfred and his companion. Was this merely because he thought social amenities were being neglected by them? That was hardly in Mr. Hector Robertson's character. Yet, as everyone knew, Mr. Robertson was a married man. His wife was away—permanently it now began to be

understood. The theory was that she could not stand the climate of Staffordshire. Some averred that she was mad; others that she was a dipsomaniac. Whatever the truth or untruth of these rumours, Mr. Robertson's manner began to be disquieting to Janet. Instinct spoke louder than reflection.

Very soon, seemingly, the Mayor's patience was exhausted. He went straight up to Wilfred—the talk fell dead at once—and said:

"I'm going to show you my likeness."

"No," said Rudolf from the sofa, where he was quite happy, it seemed, talking to the doctor's wife.

"Oh, I'll show it to nobody else. Not even to you" (to Janet), "nor you" (to Minnie); "you mustn't come."

So Wilfred was almost forcibly carried off. Robertson put his arm within that of his guest, and Wilfred suffered it, making no response. Janet and Maggie were left staring into each other's eyes mutely. Each thought, or half-realised the thought, that the other's face was a book, where men might read strange matters. Suddenly Janet spoke.

"We shall be leaving now. Can't we give you a lift? It won't be much out of our way."

"Oh, *thank* you." The other's face had once again its pleading look. Were there not tears in her eyes? Immediately after this Rudolf came up and talked to Maggie Vaughan, and the girl's expression quite changed once more. Janet had withdrawn.

But when Wilfred heard of this arrangement he was not over cordial. Perhaps he realised now that he had been taken note of, and thought that Janet was forcing his hand. So now the sister was all with her friend and against the doubting Thomas of a brother. She kept

Maggie's hand in hers a part of the way in the fly, and wondered to find it so cold. The journey of the three only lasted ten minutes. The distance, such as it was, was in an opposite direction from The Mount. The fly drew up before the tiny two-storeyed house in Coleherne Street, and Wilfred got out to give his hand to their guest. It was a moment: 'twas nothing, 'twas everything, the grasp of the small, soft hand. It is always in the supreme moment a touch which does everything: it is necessary for the passage of that insensible fluid which wakes up the fever called "love." The lamp of the fly showed her face a moment—wistful, elusive, enigmatic, reserved, appealing: what did her look mean? Only the last element, Wilfred was sure, was in it: and that awoke the better part of himself. Even now 'twas not precisely love which his thoughts acknowledged. It was, however, something akin to devotion. He yielded up his judgment, all his prejudices, to that mute appeal. What he would be required to do he could not tell. But he must perform it or sink for ever in his own eyes.

The brother and sister hardly spoke on the way back. Each had much to ruminate, and Wilfred's thoughts were now less concerned with Rudolf's artist than with Rudolf, or still more with the treatment he had received at the hands of his host. Janet was no longer so satisfied that they did well to go. Once thinking aloud, she gave expression to precisely that which had crossed her brother's mind earlier in the evening.

"I wish," she said, with a sort of passionate fervour, "she, Maggie, could get work elsewhere."

Wilfred was startled out of his reverie.

"Yes," he said; "he's an infernal bounder. I am determined never to dine with him again." But he did

not immediately take in the unnatural vigour of his sister's tone, nor till after a moment of reflection the use of the Christian name.

"What did you call her—Maggie?" he said suddenly.

"Yes. She says that's her real name, and she wants me to call her by that."

Wilfred remembered his blunder in Coleherne Street. His heart beat against his ribs.

If Janet had heard some of the talk between Rudolf and Minnie at dinner-time, and both before and after (while Wilfred was looking at the portrait), her perplexities touching the young artist and her fears would have been much increased. There was absolutely no love-making between these two. But Rudolf spoke quite freely to his neighbour about his "best girl"—Carry Smith was her name: and this Carry Smith was, it might be judged, by no means of the class called unfortunate: possibly in a position not very different from Minnie's own. Minnie did not know her. But she listened quite sympathetically and with complete *sang froid* to Rudolf's explanations. Only she gave no confidences in return.

Mr. Alison's talk also came back to Janet in the watches of the night. It was then that she realised the personal application that his speech might have had, as advice to a girl in her position to marry if possible a gentleman, but at all events to marry. What would Wilfred have thought if he could have taken in such a notion? Or her mother? Or even Eva and Hubert Newhall? And though Janet knew that the public opinion about her and her own natural shrinking from vulgarity as well, would put out of her power acting on Mr. Alison's

advice, she allowed her imagination to toy with it. Is it not always pleasant at least to toy with the idea of marriage and of motherhood? She thought first of Beck, the senior curate, who she knew had been often "given" to her. He might pass as a gentleman from his position—but not with Wilfred. For Beck's father, it was known, was a builder and contractor, just above a tradesman, but not more educated than one. Beck was awfully ugly too. Then she thought of another very unmistakable admirer—but from a distance—Alfred Harding, whom his sister spoke of as Alf. He was undoubtedly good-looking—in a vulgar way, Janet added to save her self-respect—especially in his volunteer uniform.

So, too, was little Willie Sutherland good-looking, though that of course was neither here nor there. It was curious he should be turning out a genius. Janet remembered when she first saw him, a little boy at Sunday school when she was herself a girl still not twenty, and only took a class now and again in her sister's place. She remembered Willie later at some winter school treat—he may have been thirteen then—when the children played charades: and a classical-minded curate (that was Mr. Pampillon; alas! he had quite disappeared out of Janet's life) had said, "He's like a little Eros," which Janet knew meant Cupid.

She had had Willie in her own class afterwards and always remembered him, knowing instinctively that to him she was a divine "idea."

CHAPTER XI.

THE hedges were like people in a decline. "Here and there they had given up the struggle to exist; and posts and rails filled the gap. It was not chiefly a blight in the air and in the soil which had achieved this, but mere neglect. The agricultural value of the land at this place was negligible. A few cows snorted over the smoky grass. The miners coming and going to Sir Wentworth's pit had established wide-reaching rights of way, none gainsaying them, for it is better not to gainsay miners who come and go in bands if you can avoid it. But the land about belonged to the mine-owner; and what he was out of pocket in its agricultural value was a trifle. Sir Wentworth Fitzgerald, the owner of the pit, Harpur its lessee, were equally ignorant or careless of the deep sin that he commits who frustrates the purposes of "fruitful, all-nourishing Earth."

He was an absentee too, Sir Wentworth Fitzgerald: so much a tradition only that no memory of him or of his family remained about Hartlebury but the name of the pit, Sir Wentworth's pit—no memory save, I mean, to his agent. If the Fitzgeralds had once had a manor-house hereabouts, no average inhabitant could tell you which it was, or whether still standing or no. Over in Yorkshire, however, the baronet was quite conscious of the difference it had made in his income since the mine

had been sunk. "That was old Norton's doing, you know," people would tell you. "Norton the lawyer. . . . Oh, he's dead now. Dalton has the office now. It didn't do *him* much good—old Norton. Harpur? Oh yes, Harpur has it, you know." Harpur, the lessee, had made more out of Sir Wentworth's pit than had Sir Wentworth.

Yet upon one branch of a thorn a robin was singing very cheerfully and proudly. To many of the miners, as they passed by, the notes awoke a dull echo from days of their old innocent childhood. To Willie Sutherland, far better furnished with brains and of all mortals the most innocent, the redbreast made no appeal at all.

What did appeal to Willie, and he was within sight of it now, was the continuous rhythmic movement of the chain which ran out of the engine-house, passing over a crane protruding therefrom and then descended between two trap-doors into the depths of the pit. Every minute it changed its action: still for a few seconds, it then began to settle downwards toward the pit or backward towards the engine-house: anon the trap-door would fly open and a truck full of coal poise in the air: then down again on the now shut trap-door. The chain would be released, the truck pushed by human hands off the trap on to its siding; then down went the chain again, it rattled over the wheel—paused once more, rattled backwards, and bang! the trap-door opened above another mounting truck; and so on continually with a motion as rhythmic and regular as of the crank of an engine. This was an immense pleasure to Willie Sutherland; it answered to something in his own mind, something regular and methodical: he almost saw in imagination the figures which expressed the motion, the function which gave the revolutions of the wheel, the time of the revolutions,

Of the miners who passed by, most greeted him with a certain consideration and respect, though their inward feelings were various. To many he was "that whipper-snapper." Sutherland the father was by no means popular: and he was wont to boast to all and sundry of the wonderful doings of the son. He kept dirty newspaper cuttings in his pocket, wherein was mention of his boy's name in examination lists, and generally at the top—the record of his getting the Andrews scholarship. So at least nobody could be ignorant of Willie's achievements: and among the miners there were many generous enough to have a real respect for ability.

Willie himself had come to a mental pause in his career and discontinuance of work for a brief while. He was now twenty. He had already passed through all the examinations required for a London M.A. degree. He had also got a minor scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, and would begin a residential University career in October. That he was rather old for such a beginning did not matter in Willie's case, for he looked not a day more than eighteen.

Along with this sense of rest and achievement came to the front of Willie's thoughts other feelings and vague hopes—nay, not hopes, mere dreams of hope—which, amid the absorption of integral calculus or the planetary theorem, had only played *en sourdine* there. It was joyous indeed to be again in Hartlebury; not only because his home was in Hartlebury, but because it was for Willie Sutherland the land of romance. His father's house stood a little way to the back of the mine on another ridge which, running higher at that particular spot than the main ridge (though that was on the whole the highest), gave him a vision of The Mount upon the opposite hill,

the stately building which looked so reserved and aristocratic among its trees and shrubs. It had indeed no literal towers and battlements: but in Willie's eyes it represented, and had done almost from the boy's childhood, the lordly dwellings spoken of in *L'Allegro*: and the young ladies of The Mount, Miss Ingram and Miss Janet Ingram alike, filled in his imagination the place of Milton's beauty. Romance, as I have said, from childhood almost had looked out with Willie's eyes from his little bedroom to the tall white face of The Mount. Now the smoke from the mine would hide it almost altogether; then if the wind changed it would seem near at hand. Willie Sutherland, though he cared nothing for the beauties of Nature, was a great lover of verse, especially of Milton, whose stately metre corresponded to some sense of dignity and order in the boy, a sense which in another fashion was soothed by the regular clank of the great engines. He had, as a boy in his father's house, only had access to three poets—Milton, Thomson, and Burns. Old Sutherland was more of an agnostic than a Presbyterian, and more of a Laodicean than either; yet with a good deal of the rigidity of character and rigidity of tastes which resulted from his upbringing or came from his forebears. On these grounds Milton was old Sutherland's favourite poet also.

The Sutherlands' little house was in its way conspicuous as The Mount, that is, when the smoke blew in another direction and left it free. For its ridge was quite bare. It was not worth while trying to make a shrub grow in that atmosphere. The mine, it has been said, was on another fold of land. But just above the mine these two ridges met. On the other side of Sutherland's house from The Mount, that is to say, to the south-west,

a bare region known as Brightman's ground, sown with many soundings or abandoned pit mouths—abandoned and boarded over—stretched down to border a straight, dusty, but rural highroad, the Hanbury Road. To the east Willie, who in winter generally breakfasted by candle-light, had seen many a while the sun rise among a close array of chimneys—representing Barnfield's works and the railway works seen in perspective. He saw it set among trees beyond the highroad spoken of; and northward and N.E. ran the valley between him and The Mount, with the Dane and its water-meadows in the centre, the same toward which Minnie Vaughan had looked one afternoon from North Bank.

Mrs. Sutherland the mother, a resolute woman, had had her way as to the early education of Willie—till, that is, his wonderful gift manifested itself—and had sent him to Sunday school. He was for some while in Eva Ingram's class: and she at first stood with him for the "cynosure of neighbouring eyes." But when he had been more of an age to make a choice—that is to say, it was four years ago and Willie was sixteen then—Janet being twenty-six, at a school treat (how well he remembered it!) the thunderstroke of real love caught him full in the heart—that *coup de foudre* the French love to write of. 'Twas the sight of Janet comforting a little boy who had had a fall that did it. Henceforth she became for him a goddess; The Mount was for him precisely what the Parthenon might have been for a fervent votary of Pallas Athene. Janet was for him the highest type of Englishwoman, and it is notorious that the highest type of English lady is a pattern to the world. Alas! the women of Willie Sutherland's world were not like her. They seemed to have heads too large and legs too short. They stumped

and trotted: Janet moved, he thought, like a queen. Janet's face indeed was unremarkable: yet in another sense it was distinguished. She had more distinction of manner than either her brother or Eva, being without any of the self-consciousness which troubled the second and the self-occupation which marred the first. It was these things, along with his persuasion of her goodness, that made Janet the ideal of Willie Sutherland.

Times have changed since, thirty years ago or more, to be a man of science was almost necessarily to be an agnostic, and when anti-clericalism found its sternest champions among mathematicians. This was perhaps a trick of chance. For mathematics are a branch of metaphysics rather than of science, as we understand that word; necessary to the apprehension of the physical world but not quite of it; in other words a method of thought rather than a subject of enquiry. As such they are less bound down to the practical, say, the material side of things, than experimental science is. Whether for this reason, or because the rising generation kicks against the dearest beliefs of its predecessor, Willie Sutherland had been captured to the cause not only of religion but of the "church." 'Twas Eva's doing in great measure, in part Mr. Pampillon's—he was a curate now departed from Hartlebury—but clenched by the fact that Janet Ingram was a churchwoman and church-worker, and, last of all, through the influence of Beck, the present senior curate.

Bedford and Beck were often in men's mouths together—in dissenting mouths, at any rate. As a fact, one might suppose Ralph Beck had been chosen as a foil to his chief. There was a restrained and gentlemanly unction in every movement of the Rector. Mr. Beck was in appearance simian. He was super-naturally active, but jerky

and undignified. He was much addicted to jokes, good and bad; and his creed was an admixture of Liberalism and sacerdotalism, which he had imbibed at Oxford from the late tutor of St. John's, Aubrey Moore. Aubrey Moore, it may be said, was one of the authors of "Lux Mundi"; and "Lux Mundi" when it appeared was reckoned a golden bridge thrown across to bring the Broad Church party back to the pen of sacerdotalism. The Broad Church party has disappeared. 'Twould in truth have been hard to resist the attractions which for them lay on this side of the bridge; hard even for those who were masters of their opinions, and not as in all cases are the majority liable to be carried off by what is called public opinion. By crossing the barrier the man in holy orders passed into a land of milk and honey, not indeed rich in what is called worldly prosperity or creature comforts, but in what with the majority of men is of far higher price, consideration and influence. Yesterday the Broad Church parson was a professional man among professional men; and unless he supplemented his income by writing novels (as Kingsley did), a professional man with a very poor income. To-day his successor is something very different—a "parish priest." And any man can understand the happiness he finds in being freed from the vulgar tests of success and failure, which otherwise only saints and geniuses can afford to despise.

Mr. Beck was not a saint nor a genius. But he had a touch of the qualities which make up both, and was raised above the ruck of High Church curates in whose excuse it may be said that, if they mistake the inspiration of vanity for a call Divine, they do so naïvely and quite unconsciously. Beck, being more of a real man, was in some regards less of an ideal priest. The inspirations

conflicted in his case. When in church he recited the stately and splendid language of the liturgy (he had too much literary taste to intone, though intoning marched with his views), still more when he raised his hand making the sign of the Cross, and spoke the words of the absolution, then he felt himself indeed the servant of the Most High God. And had the Roman soldiery broken in at such a moment he would have been hailed before Cæsar and suffered martyrdom without a fear and without a doubt. But the Roman soldiery sleep beneath the weight of eighteen centuries. They made duty simple to the believer. The Miss Theales and Miss Peppercorns of Hartlebury bring complications; even young women such as Janet Ingram do so. They have the gift to make the priestly office seem ridiculous. And Mr. Beck, unluckily for him, had a keen sense of the ridiculous. Then his priesthood would fall off him and he ceased to believe in it. Such changes of thought are human, and do no harm to anyone in the normal and natural work of life. But "priesthoods," like politicians, have to live constantly in the eye of "public opinion," and people exposed to this lose the power of thinking directly and quite simply. Instead of saying what he thinks, the public man has to think first what public opinion thinks that he thinks, or will think that he thinks if he says what he thinks. Public opinion indeed, that is now the successor to the lions of the amphitheatre, and for most minds much more terrible. Now and again among priesthoods and public men you may find one great enough to dare even that. Ralph Beck was not one, or only at rare moments such an one. But he had at least the sense of his shortcomings. And that leaven of grace was shown in him by this, that he longed after the society of his own sex, and did not hide his

conscience behind petticoats. Though now and again his manliness would fail him, now and again when he encountered one as well educated as himself, one with something of the clear eyes and perfect witness of all-judging Jove, then he would back out of the clash of contending truths. But at least he startled the "respectable classes" of Hartlebury by his socialistic leanings. And he had the happiness of divining that one male creature saw no fault in him; and that being was Willie Sutherland.

This was no great success while Willie had been only a schoolboy. Now Sutherland was, one might say, a man, and by general admission of extraordinary promise. A secret sympathy drew these two together, for deep down in his heart Beck had an admiration for Janet, almost as great as Willie's. He had unluckily a strong dislike to Wilfred, whose Toryism seemed to him the antithesis of Christianity. Gossip had sometimes connected Janet's name with his as a bachelor curate's name will be connected with any church-worker's. Putting his ugliness aside, he knew that he had neither the birth nor the polish which an "officer and a gentleman" of Wilfred's type would consider essential. He had indeed suppressed all hopes, and was content to worship from afar in Willie's manner. The difference was that, unlike Willie Sutherland, Beck had never betrayed his sentiment to mortal eyes.

The relationship between the curate and the mathematician was always then that between master and disciple. The master, however, was not ashamed to admit Willie to a good deal of intimacy now that he was beginning to be spoken of in Hartlebury as a "coming genius"—a wonderful phrase, characteristic of Hartlebury, but

characteristic likewise of all modern ways of thought. For it meant when scrutinised that Willie would be a genius when public opinion admitted him for such.

This time, as on almost every visit that Sutherland paid him, Beck had to congratulate the young man on some fresh success, thinking rather sadly the while how much greater his influence might have been (his influence for good he would say in his thoughts, with a tacit assumption it must be of that kind) if his college career had not been so immemorable.

"Well," he said, "life lies straight before you, if you feel that science is your vocation"—for there had been a time when Willie thought his vocation was the Ministry. The visitor knew that he had a little turned his back on his old enthusiasms. Perhaps it were truer to say that he had got a clearer insight into their source.

"I shouldn't suit for a clergyman, sir," he said, speaking as he often did still in rustic phrase.

"Well, well, that's as you feel," said Mr. Beck, dismissing the subject.

"I never seem to find words for what I want to say," Willie said, slowly pondering. "I seem to want to put it in figures."

"Ah, that's curious. I daresay the mathematical gift is a thing quite apart—like music. They're often connected, you know."

"And yet," said Willie, hesitating in his speech, "I don't fancy so much being what's called a don or a professor, or something like that."

It was evident to his companion that there was something the speaker wanted to bring out. So he only said "No?" and waited.

"It seems a monotonous, useless life. And they say mathematics is such a help in many ways."

"Oh, there's no doubt of that whatever. You might be an engineer. A good mathematician's almost always in request, I fancy." But Willie's face did not light up at the suggestion, so it was evident he had something else on his mind. Beck decided to wait.

"In passing examinations they say it's the chief thing," the other began and paused.

"Examinations?"

"I meant," said Willie, "for the service in India, for instance."

"The Indian Civil Service?" asked Mr. Beck amazed. For he had not come in close contact with the tide of interest and enthusiasm for India and its services which Mr. Rudyard Kipling was drawing to its flood.

"Haven't you read those books, 'Plain Tales from the Hills,' and 'Wee Willie Winkie,' and . . .?" Willie asked.

"No. That is, I read something about three soldiers which I didn't like," said Mr. Beck. And then he looked at the low boyish figure in front of him and said, "You require a good deal of physical strength, I fancy, to go through that life."

"I am strong enough, though I'm small," said Willie. Then he said something which betrayed the inward of his thoughts. "You see from those books that the civil ones—the civilians, that's the word—they are as much thought of as the army men."

Beck shook his head sadly. "Oh, my dear boy, I don't think it would do for you." But he deferred to another time giving all his reasons.

CHAPTER XII.

THE dinner at Panton Manor was for Miss Vaughan more than anything else an introduction to Hartlebury society. It had been her first evening engagement. But this did not bring her much more in Wilfred's way. Neither the Ingrams nor the Armitages were sociable people. Armitage was too surly and self-occupied for people to want to ask him. He was besides a man of good education and belongings, so that he would not in any case have cared for his wife to "visit" with the Porters or Mr. Robertson: and she would not have cared to either. On this very account Janet found Beatrice Armitage such an acquisition. Both were out of the main current of the Hartlebury world.

The nucleus of all society in Hartlebury was naturally the Rectory. The clergyman of a parish is bound to know everybody. If his wife is a meek person, she does the same without much social distinction, which, by the way, does seem somehow more in accordance with her husband's profession. But Mrs. Bedford was not a meek person. She belonged to the country gentry. That is to say, she was daughter of a great mine-lessee of South Staffordshire, a man older established than Harpur of Longstaffe Court, for instance: her grandfather, not her father, had risen from the ranks. So it was natural that she should reckon herself a person of importance. And as for Mr. Bedford, he was son of the

late Bishop of Calcutta, and that holds rank considerably above the colonial bishops, though not quite on a level with our English Episcopal bench. If Mrs. Bedford was as chary as possible of accepting invitations to dinner in Hartlebury, she might fairly have pleaded (I do not know whether she ever did) that when they dined with "the county" 'twas by no means certain that her husband would disobey a direct command of his Master, but that when they dined in Hartlebury, Mr. Bedford invariably went in first and took the uppermost seat at the table. If in the still watches of the night the Rector of Hartlebury was ever troubled by this inconsistency, I am quite sure that he derived no small comfort from the fact that after all the text says nothing about the top of the table at a dinner-party, but only speaks of the "uppermost room" at a "feast."

Even so therefore as it was in "the county" at the Duke of Tamworth's, that there were various shades of intimacy accorded the coal-owners, iron-masters, potters, manufacturers in activity or disponability, and some professional men, as rich solicitors, retired doctors, who lived in the manor-houses of this district, so in a lesser way it was between Hartlebury society and the Rectory. Now, as a fact, the Rectory had not yet discovered the existence of Margaret Vaughan as she was now to be: and that was natural, as Margaret Vaughan did not go to church.

It was soon after the dinner at "Robertsons'," as the working folk would have said, that this question of going to church happened to be touched on between Margaret and Mrs. Armitage. They were in the sitting-room of the former, one of her two tiny rooms in Coleherne Street, not, as everyone knows, the cheerfulest part of Hartlebury-on-Dane. Besides supplying patterns for Mason & Robert-

son, Margaret did a certain amount of china-painting on her own account, and Mrs. Armitage had come to make a few purchases as well as for the pleasure of looking at the girl—the chief ornament of the room. Wilfred had been impressed with the smallness, yes, and one must say the shabbiness, of Miss Vaughan's little lodging received at a glance. But Beatrice Armitage's feminine eye took in more of the details, the chintz-covered sofa on the same side as the door, not quite in the corner: for there was room between it and the wall for two portfolios of drawings. On the side of the door was a mahogany-painted chiffonier: opposite the sofa was the window: it had a window-box, but no flowers therein, only one sooty euonymus. The one armchair stood in the corner beyond the window. There were two other cane chairs against the square table with its green baize cloth. What struck Mrs. Armitage with most wonder was the sight of two shades on the mantelpiece covering hideous artificial flowers. "Surely," thought the visitor, "she might at least have had those taken away." All the corners of the room, save that by the door, were occupied by portfolios on easels: but most stuffed up was the corner between the chiffonier and the outer wall.

Of course Beatrice began by praising the comfort and charm of the room, while within her heart sank and was wrung with commiseration for the girl who had to live in such a place. It was a two-storeyed little house: Margaret on the ground-floor: above her an engineering apprentice had one room and took his meals with the family, and Margaret used to hear him clattering downstairs almost as if upon her bed-head every morning at ten minutes to six. ("And how does she eat?" thought Mrs. Armitage, having some knowledge of art-students and their ways.

"She'll spoil her looks in a year of this. But surely she'll marry soon—Mr. Ingram? I wonder: not likely, I'm afraid.") For these rooms looked too far remote from the rather finikin refinement of Mrs. Ingram and her son at The Mount. ("I'm even glad I never suggested to Janet coming here," thought Beatrice Armitage.)

"How long have you been here?" she asked aloud.

"Since December."

"Really. Were you in Hartlebury all that time—and nobody knew it?"

Margaret coloured a little. Beatrice could not guess why. ("There must be a lot of sensitiveness in her hidden by her matter-of-fact ways," she thought, and then with a sudden *elan* of pity and love such as the same girl had once evoked from Janet—"Oh, if I were only a man—Mr. Ingram, for instance—wouldn't I take the poor child under my protection and comfort her for all the hardships she has undergone.")

And Margaret all unconsciously answered this last sentiment in a fashion in her calm, matter-of-fact speech.

"Yes," she said. "Hartlebury's a nice place to be in in the winter for some things."

"Is it?" said the other astonished. "How?"

"Well, coal is so cheap, for instance."

"Oh!" the other groaned in spirit, and then recovering, "Oh—yes it is. We find that an advantage. Where were you the winter before?"

"In Munich."

"You have wood there, I suppose?"

"Oh no, coal—or coke. We have stoves of course. But a fire's so pleasant, isn't it?"

"And there it was you knew Mr. Rudolf Ingram? And that's how Janet and then I got to know you?"

"Yes."

"Do you think it's good, the portrait of the Mayor?"

"Oh, very." Margaret was taking some plates out of a cupboard, and Beatrice could not see her face.

"I think he's made him look rather . . ."—she got no reply and went on—"Well, I'm afraid I was going to say rather common."

Margaret had now got out the plates and put them on the table.

"Of course he is quite a handsome man, Mr. Robertson." Still the other made no remark. "Don't you think so?"

"Yes."

"And somehow Mr. Ingram's made him look—coarse rather—just a shade."

"These are what I thought you'd like to look at," said Margaret, arranging the plates on her little table. "And while you look at them I'll get some tea ready."

Mrs. Armitage felt as if someone had struck her a blow over the region of the heart. She had just begun to persuade herself that the girl's silence when Mr. Robertson's name came on the tapis was a coincidence merely, when—she noticed that her hands were trembling. Oh, what could it mean? A thousand thoughts and suspicions rushed through her mind. Margaret had been there in Hartlebury since December. And of her previous existence they knew nothing: nor how she came to be employed at Mason and Robertson's. Now Beatrice Armitage came to think of it, she had never once asked this question or heard the answer to it from anybody without asking. This girl was (to her and Janet) like a changeling from some other world. Perhaps she had quite different views of things—of morals and such-like things—from the

folk of Hartlebury. Beatrice had heard from Janet the story of "Perhaps he has a mistress." "No doubt he has a mistress," which was it? And Beatrice, recovering from her first shock, had a certain sensation of pleasurable wonder such as respectable English middle-class ladies almost always have in contemplating the possibility of "quite a different code of morals," or catching sight, even for a moment, of forbidden fruits. But because of this Beatrice resolutely refrained from formulating in her mind any definite accusation against Margaret Vaughan: the forbidden fruit glanced at, seen through a mist is one thing, on a plate with the marks of human teeth in it it is quite another thing. Yet still while pretending to examine the china, the visitor looked now and again sideways to see if she could in any wise detect a trembling still in her friend's hands. In any case it had all gone now. They took their tea together—Mrs. Armitage had made her purchase.

And now as a relief to both they talked on quite commonplace matters: only that almost inevitably the Rector and his family cropped up in the discourse. It was because Mrs. Bedford had come into Miss Mason's once when Margaret was there.

"You don't know her, then? She's not called on you?" Beatrice asked.

"No. She call on *me*! Is it likely?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Beatrice answered, with a little shrug, "how they do. But of course if you never go to church. . . ."

"I've not been yet," Miss Vaughan acknowledged.

"And that's five months, I think you said?"

"I've been to the Roman Catholic church in Deacon Street—chapel, I suppose you'd call it."

"No, I shouldn't. But you're not a Catholic, are you?"

"N—no. I like their service better than ours. . . . I remember," she went on, "what Mr. Ingram—Mr. Rudolf Ingram, I mean—said about English churches once at Munich."

"Well, what was it?"

"That they stank of respectability."

"Of course I know that to an artist to be respectable is the worst term of condemnation. . . . But I'm afraid I'm weak enough to like it myself. I don't see, for instance, why everybody can't go to church now and then just to please their neighbours. I often say that to my husband——"

"And he would think it mean, I suppose?" Margaret asked, who knew nothing of the so-called Professor.

"No, it's only that he doesn't like the trouble. Not but that he does come sometimes. And luckily he's looked upon as a sort of doctor—he is a doctor of science, you see, and his letters are often addressed 'Dr. Armitage.' Doctors are always let off from church, you know. They go out and bleed the milestones."

"And do what?"

"Haven't you ever heard that? I heard it from my father when I was a child. Doctors are supposed to drive out on Sundays and bleed the milestones. Or were. It must be a very old joke, when you think how long bleeding's been given up."

The talk drifted aimlessly among various subjects. The country round about, rural pleasures, the Bavarian Alps—to which Miss Vaughan and some Munich fellow-students had made an excursion—and many things more. But evidently the question of church-going weighed somewhat on the artist's mind, for she broke in suddenly with the question—

"Do you think I ought to go to church?"

"Not if you think it wrong, certainly."

"Oh, I don't. I don't think it either right or wrong."

"That's what I feel. It isn't certain (most people would agree really, I think—at any rate a large number) that there is any God. But it's not certain there isn't. And as there have been religious ceremonies at all times, why shouldn't they go on?"

"I see."

"At any rate you know there's almost always a place in our pew. We have two regular sittings, and if you'd like to come in with me next Sunday I would tell the pew-opener afterwards that you could always go there."

"Thank you, I think I will."

It had indeed been rather dreadful to feel oneself cut off altogether from one's fellow-citizens as they trooped in to church. Margaret had felt this most on Sunday evenings when the sound of the organ came through the stained-glass windows. Her heart had grown *mild und weich*—as she owned to herself during the last month or two, and she did not disguise the reason either. Formerly she would have kept up the traditional fight between Art and Respectability in this way as in others. But now Respectability claimed *him* in its ranks.

And yet it was all an awful state of affairs. How would it end? She did not venture to look forward or take any resolution.

A resolution however was forced upon her. At half-past eight that very evening she heard a familiar knock at the street-door. Her heart stood still. Then the still more familiar voice hailed Mrs. Chester in friendly tones.

"Is your lodger in, Mrs. Chester? It seems hard bring-

ing in business at such a late hour. But it's hard on me too; I'm just obliged to do it."

Two or three heavy steps along the passage and the handle of her door was turned without leave asked.

"You ought not to come here," Margaret said, going to the farther side of the little room.

"Oh, it's all right." (It was Mr. Hector Robertson.) "She knows I'm come on business"—this was said in a lower tone, and in a still lower he added—"Or thinks so, anyway. I just couldn't do without seeing you to-night." He put his hat down on the chiffonier, the same from which three hours before Margaret had extracted the plates, and sat down on the little sofa which faced the window. "Come and sit here," he said.

"No," she said. But in a minute she went all the same.

He put his arm round her waist to draw her nearer. This time she resisted violently.

"What's the matter with ye? If ye make a noise she'll wonder what's up." All this was said low, but now he raised his voice. "Thank you, Miss Vaughan. Yes, I like that leaf design very much. . . . Only have ye tried if it will exactly fit the plate?" All the while he was speaking he held Margaret Vaughan tightly clasped by one arm, which beside any strength which she could put forth was of iron. And soon she ceased trying to free herself.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked once more, once again too lowering his voice. "I'm thinking ye ought never to have come here. I was a fool to bring you. You're getting to know too many people."

"Oh, go away now. Please go."

"Yes, I'll go in a minute. I came to say you must meet me in Manchester next Saturday."

"I can't."

"Ye must. I've brought the money for your ticket. 'Can't'—rubbish, it's easy enough for you. It's me that runs the risk. I sometimes wish ye'd never come into my life."

"Oh, I wish it."

"Oh, come now. Your father shouldn't have left you on my hands, then! But it's in for a penny in for a pound."

"I won't meet you," said Margaret.

"Oh, I know you've got something in your head, and I think I can guess what it is. But we can't have it out here. So meet me you must. Now give me a kiss." (He took it without waiting.) "Oh, I'm not angry with you. But don't get any foolish notions in your head. It's in for a penny in for a pound with both of us. And Caroline can't last long now. She has the dropsy." Then he took up his hat and went.

Margaret Vaughan sank pale and lifeless on the sofa. "O God! O God! it's true," she thought. And there flashed into her memory one evening only five short months back, when she had wandered so content among the streets of Hartlebury—the night of the ball. Among her set in Munich, her few friends, some four or five, three were of Slavic race, one a Bohemian, two Russian girls. Along with their social theories, of which free love was one of the corner-stones, medical and physiological questions often came to the fore in discussion. All had studied anatomy and some physiology, and one of the Russian girls had taken a medical degree before she took to art. Through these discussions, Margaret had held in those

days—in days no farther off than last January—her well-defined physiological theory why she was contented with life, why free from such vague wishes and half-hysterical aspirations (so she deemed them) as plagued her English sisters. And it was perhaps the possession of a theory in harmony with it which kept her always conscious of this groundwork of satisfaction with her way of life. There was nothing entrancing in her life—what people understood by real love she knew she did not know; and gloried in her freedom . . . then. And now? How had everything become so different? How could a few glances from one pair of eyes make all the difference?

What was it she found in Mr. Ingram—in Wilfred? (Even as she said the name to herself she blushed with pleasure.) He was not even so good-looking as—as . . . the other. As an artist she must own that. And her life had been so entirely outside the social life of the general that she did not formulate the commonplace answer, "He is a gentleman." That was the root of the difference. No doubt Hector Robertson had begun life—nay, had begun this relation with Margaret—with as strict religious injunctions to morality as any young Scotsman might have. But when they had broken down there was no chivalry left to make him take the blame on himself: on the contrary, he nourished a constant unacknowledged rancour against his ward that she had yielded so easily. A good "Scottish lassie" would never have done that. A good Scottish lassie would have breathed such an air of purity around her that evil thoughts would have perished of themselves. And though Hector Robertson never tried to deny to himself that they were (as he had said) both in for it till the end, he did not look forward to the inevitable day when dropsy would make him a free man.

Evidently, lucky in other things, he was not destined (he decided) to be lucky in his wives.

CHAPTER XIII.

RUDOLF had spent one night at The Mount after the portrait of the Mayor of Hartlebury was completed.

"I'm glad the job's over," he said.

"I should think so!" his cousin answered. "If one had to stay in the house of that bounder . . ." hoping so to bring his cousin to a conviction of sin: for the memory of the dinner at Panton Manor was fresh in Wilfred's mind.

Rudolf was much too combative to submit to admonition. "Oh, I don't mind his being what you'd call a bounder."

"What anyone would," Wilfred interjected.

"I've got over all those absurd British notions that everyone must think and do and say the same things. Robertson's not by any means a fool nor an uneducated chap either. You know he came here originally as a chemist—analytical chemist, I mean. And he spent a year or two in Germany: he's read a good many German books. I found a lot in the house: he's lent me one or two to take away. . . . The odd thing is . . ." But here Rudolf suddenly paused.

"What?" Janet asked. The conversation was at dinner.

Rudolf looked at her with the peculiar short-sighted scrutiny his eyes took on sometimes. He had had just that look the afternoon of his first arrival.

"Well," he said, pausing in his speech, "the more I painted him the more I thought I'd seen him before."

"You might have done. Doesn't he go sometimes to Germany still?"

"Yes; but he swore—said, I mean—that he'd never been to Munich."

"He'd no object in saying so if he had been."

"No," said Rudolf, and dropped the subject.

"You travelled about sometimes, didn't you? You may have met him at some German town."

"Yes; quite possibly," her cousin said, as if the question had lost all interest for him.

"What possible reason could anyone have for saying they had not been to Munich if they had been? Unless he's committed a murder there. And even Wilfred doesn't suspect him of that."

"No; of course: no reason. I made a mistake: that's all."

Wilfred had the opportunity of reflecting how little he had been able to impose his views upon his cousin. It was another instance of the degeneracy of the times, that an Ingram should think it made no difference whether a man was a bounder or not. He knew he was right, but . . . Along with the strength of his convictions there passed, as so often with Wilfred, a baffled feeling. The force, the almost passion with which he held the main article of his creed, the duty of being a gentleman, and the duty of gentlemen to stand by one another, prevented his ever formulating it. And he wasn't a clever chap in that way, he knew. "In that way"—well, he might leave "that way" out. He wasn't clever. He couldn't read German, and hadn't travelled in Germany, nor indeed anywhere in Europe. Julia Barnfield had been surprised that he hadn't heard of that place she had been at. At any rate, however, he had been in India. Wilfred looked

back to that fact with satisfaction, as to every fact connected with his military life.

Had he ever known ~~any~~ language? A little Latin and French fairly well when he passed into the army: unfortunately he had forgotten it now. He had always wished he could find time to rub up his Latin: for certainly men of the Robertson type knew no classics. But when he had found a school *De Bello Gallico* and tried to read it, he could only pick out a fair number of words he knew and make a guess at the sense of the stuff. Nowadays one hadn't much time for reading. His work at the brewery gave him much more worry than of old: it was in fact liable to revision at superior hands.

Even his pleasures were not numerous. Hunting was almost entirely a thing of the past. Now and again an old friend of the family gave him a mount. But several of his father's friends had died or left the neighbourhood; and Wilfred did not make many friends of his own. There was a cob for his mother's use. She would have felt humiliated beyond words—and her son for her—if she could not preserve this much of distinction before her neighbours. On Saturdays she would take Wilfred out to the golf links; sometimes both son and daughter. This was really almost all the healthy exercise Wilfred took. There was the twenty-five minutes' walk into the town every morning, and the thirty-five minutes' pull up the hill—often rather exhausting—when he returned from his work. One couldn't take walks in a country like this.

Janet could, however. Since she had known Beatrice Armitage, an enthusiastic though ignorant lover of nature, that had been her chief amusement: she only kept up her golf in order to play with her brother when he wanted her to.

Wilfred did not travel. Now that he was really an employee his holidays were strictly limited in duration: a tolerable limit of thirty days in the year, Bank holidays not counting. But every day of these thirty Wilfred Ingram could make use of in what was for him the one great enjoyment of life—a run up to town and a few days spent chiefly at his club—the Junior Army and Navy. Since the time I write of this club has come to an end. It had the advantage, rare among service clubs, of putting a few bedrooms at the disposal of its members. Whenever possible, Wilfred arranged his visits some time in advance: so as to avail himself of this privilege. For it was not to see any special sight, to do any particular thing that he came to town; but to taste the unspeakable joy of leaving Hartlebury and its world behind him and spending a few days in the society of men he considered his equals. At almost any time of the year, so long as the club was open, there were sure to be a few members passing through London—just back from service abroad. And the emptier the club, the more sociable were those who remained. Naturally Wilfred's connexion with his old regiment grew very slender in the course of a few years: the acquaintance or friends he now had of his former profession, had been mostly made at the club.

An inexpressible exaltation used to fill Wilfred Ingram's heart when he found himself at Hartlebury station taking his ticket for one of these absences (second class, he could not at these times bring himself to travel third). This particular occasion was a month after Rudolf's final visit to The Mount—about six weeks since the Robertson dinner. There was a crowd at the station; but the train did not come in full, and Wilfred had taken his place in an empty compartment (the porters at Hartlebury were

very polite to him always, and he was liberal in his tips), when the door was opened again and a man said to two companions—

“Well, I don’t care, I’m going to get in here,” and in he got. “Sorry to intrude,” he said; “but if they won’t put on enough third-class carriages, I’m bound to go second.”

“Oh, it’s all right,” Wilfred answered, returning to his paper.

“Ere, come on,” the man said to one behind him. “Thank you, sir.”

“Right you are,” said the second, and he half raised his hat to Wilfred as he took his seat. The third followed.

“There’s almost always trouble ’ere by this train. I can’t think why it is the company don’t make provision.”

This was said by the last arrival, partly to his friends, partly as an apology to Wilfred. But the latter saw no necessity for replying. So for the rest of the journey the intruders talked only among themselves.

The train had left the station. For a little while it sped on a high embankment which overlooked the slate roofs and narrow streets of Hartlebury: then it on its side was overlooked by giant mines which seemed to breathe in earth-shaking pants as if an Enceladus were chained at the bottom of each pit. Fields of ashes smouldered beneath a sulphurous smoke. Soon all these things too were left, and curve by curve a beautiful country opened to view, flashing by—a country of parks and manor-houses, of deep-bosomed oaks, of mossy rills and knee-deep in long grass and buttercups, or of beautiful roads and soft lanes running under the shade of elms and quickset and briars. Wilfred glancing at his companions decided that they were commercial travellers. But then almost

everybody "of that sort" encountered by Wilfred in a train was for him a commercial traveller. If he had been more observant or more conversant with human nature he would have seen that only the thick-set man with a heavy moustache was almost certainly a "commercial"; that the bald man with thin reddish-grey "Vollbart" of a chapel-like cut was almost certainly not, but a small tradesman—chemist or draper; and that the third—strongly built too, with moustache and beard, but no whiskers—might be either. The bald man looked about fifty-two: the other two under forty, but not much under.

The bald man, whose face was pinched and had an unalterable expression of melancholy, nevertheless seemed to think the occasion required something different from him. He patted his hands on his knees with a forced joviality.

"You're starved in these carriages," he said.

"Yes; it's very cold weather for the time of year," the "intermediate" answered.

"You want a good coat like mine, Mr. Nodkins," said the "traveller." "Feel that!"

"Yes," said Mr. Nodkins, doing as he was bidden, "that's a good coat."

"I don't hold with travelling without a coat. I don't care what time of year it is. Ye're almost always cold travelling."

"Oh, I'm not nesh at all, y' know. I dunno what makes the carriage so cold."

Very soon they started upon matters of business. The eternal grievance, the eternal menace to the small tradesman could not long lie outside the range of their talk.

"Oh," said the thick-set man, "I don't like those big houses myself, y' know. It's destroying our business

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pretty much the same as it's destroying yours. They all have their buyers. And some of them's beginning to manufacture for themselves. It gives nothing for us to do, nothing at all."

This was the first Wilfred heard.

"And it's all cheap, cheap, cheap!" spoke the little man, in continuation. "That's all the coostumers care for nowadays. When a man has a line that 'ee's stoodied all 'is life, why, he takes an *interest* in it. But those foremen and overseers and buyers and shop-walkers and the like—how should it be the same with them? Why, it's not *likely*."

And so the discussion went on.

For some time the third of the group, whom I have called the "intermediate," said nothing. Now having removed his pipe to spit, he put in his word.

"Y' right," he said. "It's a bad thing, it's a bad thing every way. And not least it's a bad thing for the young women who serve in those places. They're not looked *after*. It's mooch the same with them as with girls in a mill and sooch-like. But there's many a respectable family who'd never dream of letting their daughter go into a mill; but don't think no 'arm in putting her into one of these big selling 'ouses. It's corroopting a new class, as you may say."

The bald man nodded his approval. But the "commercial" would not go so far.

"No; I don't agree there," he said. "No; I think that's nonsense."

"You're not a married man, you know, Mr. Martin," the bald man intervened.

"Well, but I'm talking generally. You'll not tell me that a 'ouse like Marchant & Putman in Manchester don't

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look after their young women. For I know they *do*—most particular.”

“There’s some houses does and some doesn’t,” said Mr. Nodkins.

“But there’s more as doesn’t,” the third man intervened once more. “And in London it’s worse than either Manchester or Birmingham. It’s not to their *interest* to be too particular.”

“Now, ’ow do you make that out? They’ve a name to lose,” from the thick-set man.

“Why, no, of coorse it isn’t. Stands to reason. If a girl’s not steady, she makes her wages—in the street, as you may say; and she goes to the business to be respectable—see?”

“I never thought of that,” said Mr. Nodkins, ruminating. “But it’s certain they can’t look after their girls like a man in a private way can.”

“Why, it stands to reason. They can undersell us for that very reason.” (So the intermediate was a tradesman, not a traveller.) “They don’t want and they don’t *ask* a character with their hands. Even with men it coomes *cheaper*. But you want good shop-walkers, *then*, y’ know. But with young women it stands to reason their work’s cheaper. It isn’t what they get at the shop; but it gives them a respectability, you understand me. Oh, I’m not speaking without knowledge, Mr. Martin. That very thing happened with a coosin of my wife’s. They’re Bradford people. Their daughter was in Sheffield, I think: anyway in one of these large ‘stoors.’ She always wrote to them from there, y’ know. Of course they thought she was well looked after. Oh, they had dreadful trouble with her.”

Mr. Nodkins nodded sympathetically.

"Well," said the thick-set man, "a girl might get into trouble anywhere."

"Trooble!" said his opponent; "they're too clever to get into trooble. That's the worst of it: most of them."

"Poor gurls!" said Mr. Nodkins. "And if they was to keep respectable I guess them as wasn't too particular would get pushed" (it rhymed to "flushed") "up above them—what with being better dressed and knowing 'ow to make theirselves look nice and all . . ."

"And pleasing the foreman or the boss himself. That's the worst part of all," No. 3 continued. "Oh, they're a bad lot some of the bosses too. What would it be" (he quite ignored the other traveller, the doubter now) "if you and me was to take 'ands of that kind? I mean private business men, as you and I might be?"

"I am in business," said Mr. Nodkins.

"I supposed you were. I daresay there won't be much difference between our lines."

"I am in millinery," said Mr. Nodkins.

"I'm not fur different," said No. 3, turning to look out of the window, as if he appealed to an imaginary audience. But more information he did not vouchsafe.

Meantime the neglected traveller who had been puffing at a cigar took it out, spat, and without looking at his two companions, said—

"Well, I don't believe above half of what you've been saying."

"That's because you don't know," the persistent third man answered. "Ah'm not speaking from want of knowledge. And this is another story that I *know* to be true. . . ."

Wilfred inwardly cursed his fellow-travellers for their intrusion into his compartment. But he cursed himself

too that he should have stopped reading his paper to listen to their talk. He had the obstinate belief of the chivalrous man and the conservative in the goodness and purity of the other sex—outside of course that one class whose existence was a kind of public necessity. And he would never listen to any suggestion that the old laws of morality were losing their hold anywhere. So that all this talk was distasteful enough. Yet having begun, he had been unable to stop listening. The tale, however, which followed made his blood boil with indignation, and spoilt for him the pleasure of the rest of the journey. He plunged into his *Times*, he resolutely refused to hear a word more, and succeeded to that extent. But in the midst of reading the score of the last cricket match he would suddenly feel as it were a blow at the heart, and the impression of that horrible story would come surging back.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALL was forgotten so soon as Wilfred found himself in a cab crossing those streets he knew so well which lay between Euston and the Haymarket. He was so little adventurous, that these visits to London lay almost as much in a beaten track as his life at home. That Euston Road into which he debouched from the station—its length, its limits were unknown to him, . . . and of the network of quiet Bloomsbury Squares through which he drove next he knew no more than what he saw from his vehicle. They always had a soothing effect on his thoughts. Though the name Bloomsbury shocked his sensibilities and had a vulgar sound in his ear, yet there was certainly

a something of dignity in these leafy squares, sooty too but quiet, between two great lines of traffic. But Wilfred's perfect happiness began at Piccadilly, which for him contained the essence of London.

He was in luck too. For he had barely deposited his luggage and washed off the dust of his journey, and was gazing rather aimlessly at the ticking tape, when a man close to him said, "How are you? It's Ingram, isn't it?" For Wilfred, always rather slow, had not immediately responded, though he recognised Philip Beach well enough. They had been brother officers for two years in the York and Lancaster Regiment. Beach was just going out but would be back for dinner.

"Stupid of me," he said, when he found Wilfred again in the smoking-room. "I forgot to say I was thinking of going to a theatre to-night and want to dine early."

"All right. It's just the same to me. I sha'n't be long." And Wilfred went upstairs to dress.

They looked at the table of play-bills when Wilfred came back. There was Duse in *La Tosca*, and a revival of *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Chinese Idol*, and *Mortimer's Millions*—a sentimental drama, one of the first of that series written to display the virtues of the financier, the meanness of poets, artists, *et hoc genus omne*; and there was Corana dancing at the Palace: such a wealth that it was hard to choose, so that still undecided they went to dinner.

Beach related his experiences. He had come in for the last of Kitchener's campaign: earlier he was in Burma. His only other war service (not counting Dacoits) till last year had been on the Chitral border two years earlier. Was this, then, really better than dining alone? Wilfred thought. This Afghan border war broke out three years

after Wilfred had been compelled to resign. What a lot Beach had seen and done since then! And he, Wilfred, had vegetated in Hartlebury all these years!

They talked of mutual acquaintances in old days, from many different branches in the service. How many had left the service! There was some comfort in that thought: still more comfort in the turn the conversation took.

"You can't wonder," said Beach. "Look at the Government. Look at the War-Office. Why, old Turnbull was one of the keenest men I ever knew when we were in Afghanistan. Well, what happened when he got back to England? They put down his battery. They'd have given him a billet if he'd go out to Hong Kong—garrison artillery, you know. Well, it wasn't good enough. The other Johnny was cousin to Pemberton, got a D.S.O.; and Turnbull, who'd been in the job from the start, got nothing. It isn't good enough that sort of thing."

"Yes," said Wilfred, in sight of his favourite topic. "I suppose everything's worse now than it was even when I was in the service. What can you expect? When everything in the long run depends on the votes of a lot of working-men and Dissenters who simply hate the services."

"That's it. The chiefs know that they'll never have a free hand and it demoralises them in the end. They end by playing for their own hand, don't you see. And these infernal newspapers. They do more harm than anything else."

"I should think they do. They ought to be hung, some of those war-correspondents. However, Kitchener wouldn't have them in the Soudan."

"Oh, he had to climb down more or less. If there's another war he'll let them in, you'll see."

And so the talk went on. So congenial was it to both that the theatre was given up. The subject was not exhausted when they adjourned to the smoking-room, where they found a cosy party. Beach knew two of the men present. There were some introductions; and the congenial subject of Wilfred's and Beach's talk spread in what had been a rather silent party. Every evil of the time was passed in review—saving the very one which to Ingram was the most crying of all—the introduction of so many “new men” into the social life of England. That could not be touched upon in a mixed company, or touched but lightly. For every third officer you met nowadays was the offspring of a “new man.”

“But I thought you were going to a theatre,” said Wylie, one of Beach's acquaintances.

“We thought of it—what's the best thing to see?”

“Oh, *The Chinese Idol*.”

“I don't know. *The Monte Carlo Girl's* good enough,” said Fordham.

“It's a good drama I like,” said O'Donnell of the Westmeath Fusileers. “Now there's *The Night's Secret*.”

“I call that melodrama,” said another.

“Melodrama or drama, I don't care what you call it, that's the sort of thing I like. Only not the Irish ones—ye know the old-fashioned things, *Colleen Bawn* one was called. They're all lies.”

“I saw that when I was a little chap,” Beach said. “It was a revival then.”

“*No Way*,” said an older man—“*No Thoroughfare*, I mean: that was very good.”

Numerous other melodramas were discussed. It might have been noticed that after all these were the plays which lingered longest in most memories.

"*The Silver King*—that beats them all," O'Donnell asserted to someone who had cited that piece.

"The gentleman burglar—he always takes the gallery," a young officer sniffed. For in addition to his martial career he professed "culture."

"And they do exist," said O'Donnell. "Now I'll tell ye a story. Though after all"—he pulled himself suddenly short—"it's a different thing altogether. . . . I'll tell it ye all the same," he went on. "You'll know him"—he turned round to another veteran—"Fairhill who used to command the Forty-ninth. He's major-general now, but he's retired. Well, he was travelling in Spain, and there he made acquaintance with a very pleasant man, a Count de la Torre, who spoke two or three languages and Spanish pretty well. Fairhill's mother, ye know, she was a Frenchwoman. He's a Catholic, ye know, Fairhill . . ."

"To his sorrow," said another veteran, an Ulsterman.

"Oh, what does it matter, man? Though I agree they don't make such good soldiers as the Protestants. They're too hot-headed. But I've seen . . ."

"Oh, go on with your story, O'Donnell," said someone.

"Oh, it's not much of a story. They came to a place—I forget the name of it—where there was only one train. No; I'm telling ye wrong: it was this way. They'd met and travelled together for a day these two, and the Count de la Torre had been very good-natured in looking out trains and making enquiries (for ye can't trust the timetables. I found that myself even when we only went for two days to Madrid from Gib.). He'd made a sort of 'bunderbust,' as you may say, for Fairhill. But they'd parted. And when Fairhill came to this place—I'd rather remember the name of it if I could—it was on the tip of my tongue just now. . . . However, it's of no con-

sequence. There was only one train a day, and the 'bunderbust' was wrong there; for the train had left. Well, up turns the Count de la Torre again, and he'd wanted to go by the same train, and just in the same difficulty. So they settled to take a *voiture* between them, and they did. They were going along quite happily in a wild country, and Fairhill he nodded off a bit, and then a jerk of the carriage stopping him woke him up and he found the Count with a revolver in his hand leaning over him. Well, what was he to do? He hadn't a chance. So he just had to let them . . ."

"Who's them?" a listener asked.

"Why, the driver; he was in it of course. And they'd taken up a third man, he found. Between them they tied up poor Fairhill and drove off with all his bags and baggage. Well," he finished, "I'd have been in the same case. I have my revolver of course, but never with me except when I'm on service."

"Oh, one ought to have a revolver."

"Oh yes. You'd feel such a fool if you'd a burglar in the house. For he'd have a revolver right enough," as one of the men present assented.

"I've got my old service revolver. But I expect it's good for nothing now," Wilfred said to Beach his neighbour.

"And you live in the country. Well, I think that's stupid."

Then the party broke up: some—Wilfred was one—migrated to the billiard-room, some to the card-room. And the night stole on. Till at last he who was sleeping in the club was left alone. And once more the feeling came back to him that even *these* were strangers in a strange world.

A waiter met him: "I will show you your room, Captain Ingram"—here too he was often called "captain" by the *valetaille* and did not always correct it—and went before him to the top of the house, switching on the electric light at the top landing and in the bedroom when he entered it.

How orderly everything looked! His morning clothes brushed and folded, the can of hot water in his basin. The latter he would have had at home, the former not: nor all his kit arranged so neatly on the toilet-table. And then the electric light: that was the crowning glory of the affair. Nay, not that: the crowning glory was always the same thing, that he was fifty leagues or thereabouts from Hartlebury.

Wilfred sat in the armchair a moment, taking in these thoughts, chewing the cud of the evening he had spent. Then for no particular reason he opened his door and looked out. The electric light had been switched off again: the corridor was almost dark with some faint reflected light lighting the end of it. Listening, Wilfred heard a door bang far below, then silence. He was the only sleeping member that night, and likely enough at this moment shared the vast building with the house-keeper and his wife only—they far away in some unknown region. Certainly 'twas strange to think that all the friendliness and talk of an hour since should have vanished like smoke. How much less it meant to them than to him. Yet after all, why? What had he really to complain of in his lot? Didn't they all pay deference to his wishes at The Mount, make all arrangements to suit his pleasure? He felt a self-accusation, a remorse that he should find enjoyment in being here so utterly alone like a prisoner in his cell. Suppose for punishment

he were one day to find himself . . . ? What rot! and he set to work vigorously at his undressing.

Wilfred was not given to imaginative auto-suggestion. He could not guess whence such a notion had entered his mind. . . . Oh, of course they were talking about burglars. Well, Bunbury was right about not being in the country without a revolver. He would not wonder if he bought one next day. Stupid not to have kept his service revolver in repair!

Burglars and revolver talk somehow disturbed his dreams. Once he awoke with his heart thumping violently in a state of burning indignation.

"My God!" he said, on plumbing his memory, "it's that beastly story I heard in the train!"

The next day passing Rigby's shop he went in to look at the revolvers there. He was, it has been said, not an imaginative man. But no man is without the power of thinking in images: all men use that faculty much more than they suppose; and it was in the nature of things that some sort of picture of his encounter with an assailant should present itself to Wilfred's mind. The form it presented itself in was of a—burglar, say—standing up to him much more than such a person would be likely to do in real life. Possibly a sense of fair-play made the idea of—say—shooting at a man who was escaping from a window so distasteful to Wilfred, that even imagination refused to present pictures of that kind. And again he imagined himself not at once bringing the revolver into evidence: having it rather as a last resort if the map refused to be cowed.

The effect of which was that Wilfred bought a very pretty nickel-plated Webley's "bull-dog" of .450 bore that would be almost concealed in a man's hand. And

when he went out of the shop with his purchase he was amazed at himself, that he could have gone all these years without a serviceable weapon. He was amazed and in a manner ashamed. As a man-at-arms it was his duty not to have done so; and Wilfred always considered himself a soldier at heart. How it was he had let the old service revolver rust: that now he could not understand. The pride of the soldier swelled in his heart. Those over there—especially such as he considered his enemies over there—Robertson, for instance, sank into a lower grade as *pekins*. Mentally he brandished his weapon in all their faces. The burglar sank out of sight. The truth is the abolition of the duel has been one potent instrument in mixing up the classes. Suppose he came to fisticuffs with any of them, a mere vulgar brawl. Wilfred felt he would lose in dignity whatever happened. There were no rules of procedure about fisticuffs which would serve to distinguish the man jealous of his honour from the brawler. In the old days it was not so.

CHAPTER XV.

WILFRED returned to the full excitement of politics and the election which was now near. But there were other than public events which moved other of the inhabitants of Hartlebury-on-Dane. There as throughout England the year divides itself between the anticipation of the coming holidays and the regret for them when past; only that along with the last feeling is another factor unrecognised and unacknowledged, a certain pleasure in treading once more the accustomed paths. Wilfred, as in so many interests, stood apart from all this;

so did Mrs. and Miss Ingram. Almost the only visits the former paid were to her married daughter, far away in Sussex. These absences of the mother usually took place in the winter to avoid the worst rigours of the Staffordshire climate, and lasted a longish time. Janet went ~~there~~ separately, and paid other visits among her relations and one or two friends. These were independent of the official holiday time at Hartlebury-on-Dane.

That for the working-men was a week with margins, and was called "play-week." Then furnaces were damped down: the war—for such it has almost grown to be—'twixt capital and labour ceased for that week. There is a description in the *Germania* of Tacitus of a Pax Dei (or Deae) which used to ensue among some of the pre-historic German tribes, when a certain mother-goddess was brought in her chariot to drive through their lands. "Play-week" was such a rigid observance that it may have had an origin as remote and sacred. Since then, and in a more normal fashion, its holiness had been claimed by the Catholic Church. It represented the octave of St. Bartholomew, to which saint the parish church was dedicate. For the richer folk it was a play-month. Or if the head of the house could not leave his business for so long, he contrived that his family should have the month—generally at the sea-side. Some went to Blackpool or Burlington, some to remote Llandudno in North Wales or to Rhyl or Barmouth; and a few sought the east coast, Scarborough or Yarmouth. To Southern England none went or next to none. Partners had to accommodate one another; so that some holidays began, some ended with play-week. And thus for social purposes the months of August and September were but blanks in the life of Hartlebury.

Things seemed to stagnate. And yet nothing stagnates utterly; and this year the simmering of politics kept gossip more alive than of wont. It was not to be expected that many persons would concern themselves with how Margaret Vaughan kept her holidays. There were exceptions even to this rule. And though—it has been said—the girl herself had small powers of anticipation, and took things as they came, it was borne in upon her that she would before long have to pay the price of her rashness of five months ago, the price exacted from all who enter that “lions’ den” of the reputable world. She had foreseen it, but she had not foreseen it. For the price was like to be in very different metal than she had bargained to pay.

Wilfred had disappeared for the while from her ken. Janet Ingram went away to stay with Uncle John and her aunts in August. The Armitages left soon after. Margaret had now several other acquaintances in Hartlebury. But there was little chance of meeting Wilfred at any of these houses; and the artist, who was not accustomed to make social sacrifices, neglected these people at first and then was afraid to go. As it was, a whisper passed through the air and echoed in her ears. Or was it the rather curious blindness of Mrs. Porter leaving Stebbing’s shop one afternoon as Margaret was coming down the street, hurrying her daughter through the door and never looking round afterwards—was it this that gave a solidity to the airy echoes?

It was then that Margaret Vaughan went home, and as far as her nature allowed, tried to look things in the face. She was not—no, she *would* not be in love with Wilfred Ingram. All his ideas and hers she felt were antagonistic. There was no use speculating on the pos-

sibility of a life spent with him. For it was obvious, certain almost as anything could be, that the chance would never be given her; and not certain, very far from certain, that if by a miracle it were and taken, it would not lead to misery. And yet . . . and yet . . . That momentary vision of the chance offered. . . . And the worst was that her past life was destroyed: somehow turned to dust and ashes or worse. All that she had congratulated herself on those six months ago! What fever was it that had so changed her palate, that what seemed wholesome food then seemed poison now? He—Hector was the poison. His rough ways and vulgar love-making had seemed all right then. Margaret had never really loved the man. But he pleased her senses. He was good-looking and strong. And if there was no chivalry in his love, she felt as independent as he was. The ideas she had imbibed during those years at Munich had grown into her mind. They were the ideas of her set. Life had all manner of interests beside love: that was to be taken by the way, as it turned up. Above all, women were to school themselves not to give it a first place: that way lay hysteria, that way lay the slavery of the sex. It had been all Margaret's pride and joy that she had escaped these weaknesses. 'Twas partly due, she knew, to her own extra robust physique. But that would have been insufficient had she not adopted the "new way" of love. Now (as has been said already) she could give no name to the influences which had changed her. But in every nerve she felt the difference between Wilfred and "the other one." She was catching a glimpse from afar off of the "old way" of love. A thing whose scars are easy to jest at in the abstract is a very different matter to who has felt the wound.

To Janet herself there came some echo likewise of the rumours which were beginning to go round about her friend. They were yet so faint that they would have been unnoticed, only that of a sudden she remembered that even in July Beatrice Armitage seemed to have left off talking of her—some time in July. Yes, now she reflected, in June, at the beginning of June, the “Enigma” had been a very frequent subject of talk between them. Then had come the dinner-party at the Manor, and Janet’s gossiping interest in Minnie, who called herself Margaret henceforth, sharpened to something personal and to half a fear. Was it an instinct?—but do what she would, the moment she, Janet, was out of that girl’s presence a certain repugnance to the thought of her as a sister-in-law would make itself felt. She had awaited an opportunity of talking over her feelings with Beatrice. But somehow the opportunity had not come; and to her, on looking back, it appeared as if her friend had been the cause of this: that she had glided by the subject. Now Beatrice was away.

It was, in fact, not till the end of September that Janet got a fair and square opportunity of talking about Margaret Vaughan.

“Oh, that girl, Minnie Vaughan—Margaret, isn’t it?” Beatrice spoke with an extraordinary air of forgetfulness. Just such a tone the London hostess is apt to take, when there is question of someone whose acquaintance can confer no social advantage. Janet, who knew nothing of London hostesses, was amazed, but she saw there must be a purpose of some sort in such a change of manner.

“Haven’t you seen her lately? I thought you’d taken to her so much.”

“You know she did come here once or twice.”

"Months ago."

"I should have liked to see more of her. But I've been very busy. She interested me ever so much." (How *remotely* Beatrice spoke now.)

"Why, I know that. We've talked of her over and over again. And I thought you would be just the person to draw her out."

"Yes, and I . . ." There came a notable change over the face of the speaker. "I did *mean* to see more of her. . . . I wish I had!"

"Well, you always can," Janet said.

"Y-yes."

The change in Beatrice's face was more noticeable still. There was no doubt it meant something serious. And those vague half rumours and half hints took shape.

"What is it?" Janet asked, alarmed.

"I don't know, my dear," Beatrice said, thrown off her guard, and with a tremble in her voice. "I wish I did; I wish I had made more effort . . ."

"But what's the matter?"

"Have *you* seen her much lately?"

"What *do* you mean? Tell me."

"I can't. There's nothing to tell."

"But there's something on your mind. You must tell me." And then as Janet reviewed the possibilities it was obvious that the something must be of one kind. "I am afraid that I know what it is."

"You do?"

"You mean . . . you think she sees ~~too~~ much of Mr. Robertson?"

"I'll tell you what I do think, if you'll swear to keep it to yourself."

"But he's married—didn't you know that?"

"Of course I know it. That's the trouble."

"Do you really mean that . . . ?"

"That she's his mistress—if you ask me, I do think so."

"How dreadful! How horrible! Oh, it's impossible. He's said to be a very good man."

"My dear Janet, you've been brought up with such very strict notions."

"*Beatrice!*"

"Oh, I don't mean that it's not abominable in this case. All I mean is that you must allow for the fact that the world over *liaisons* are not thought rather worse than murder as you think of them."

"I can't believe it," Janet said afterwards in reflecting on this dialogue. For this was in fact the first time in her life that among her own class she had been brought face to face with what is called in the prayer-book "mortal sin."

And then when she was left alone Janet began to reflect on all the possible aspects of this awful business. What were Wilfred's feelings in respect of Margaret? Janet saw in looking back that she had not given her brother nearly as many opportunities of meeting the artist as a kind sister might have done who was heartily anxious to promote a brother's love affairs. And yet what had she against Margaret then? What other motive for holding back than a sister's half jealousy, and the opportunities which Wilfred's iron reserve put into her hand of regulating the pace of things? By a strange inconsistency she reproached herself bitterly for this now: now when she ought to have been glad that matters had never reached a crisis. A sudden and immense pity for Wilfred's solitary state filled her mind. He had not even the capacity for making friends, and had nothing in his life which at

all corresponded to what Beatrice Armitage was for Janet. Besides Janet had Eva; but Hugh and Wilfred were hardly on friendly terms. If this hadn't come up, and Wilfred and Margaret had been really in love with one another, and she, Janet, had stayed the course of an idyll? How could she have ever forgiven herself? It was very inconsistent and illogical, but so ran the course of the girl's reflections.

'Twould have been better had she thought of actualities and what was to happen if Wilfred broke down some of his reserve and insisted on knowing why he was not to see Margaret Vaughan again. For somehow Janet could not face the idea of asking her to The Mount again; yet she could not make any definite plans for eliminating her. She drifted on, leaving things to chance, and when at last Wilfred did bring up the matter it was to take her utterly unprepared.

Wilfred's time was more than usually occupied at this moment—partly through the renewal of all trade activity which followed the close of the holiday season, partly through the stir of the approaching election. But Margaret Vaughan was never quite absent from his thoughts. It was not immediately that he began to notice her absence from all Janet's conversation, and that as a fact he had not met her for a long time at the Armitages, nor heard Mrs. Armitage speak of her any more than had Janet. The next stage was to realise how helpless in all social matters is the position of a man in regard to one of the opposite sex. He had no power to ask Margaret to The Mount, and he had not yet reached the point of asking that she should be asked. Nor had the device of lunching at the Hartlebury Unionist Club (though there was plenty of excuse for so doing now) been as fruitful in

results as three months ago. Could he bring himself to remonstrate with Janet? It was a hard thing to have to do. But Wilfred saw that the alternative was to let his happiness depend on Janet's caprice. He was (he said) man enough not to allow that. Yet possibly he would never have screwed up his resolution had he not chanced once again to meet Margaret in the old way in Deacon Street. But she did not stay and speak to him, but hurried past after giving him her hand for a moment. And Wilfred thought the hand had grown thin, that she looked pale and pinched herself. Then another feeling, a sense of chivalry, a memory of that mute appeal and that mute promise at the door in Coleherne Street beneath the light of a fly lamp armed his resolution. When he did speak—as always happens after long hesitation—he spoke abruptly without warning.

"I say, you know," he said to Janet, as they were breakfasting together, "why did you take up that girl, Rudolf's friend, last May, and now have dropped her like a hot coal?"

Janet looked with startled eyes.

"Maggie, you mean?" she said, to gain time.

"Yes; of course I mean the girl you call Maggie."

What was she to say? Janet now saw that this attack had been inevitable, and that she had made no preparation for it. The whole terror of the situation dawned on her.

"No; she's not been here lately," she said, in a helpless way.

"I know that," and Wilfred spoke sharply. "What I want to know is why?"

"Do you want me to ask her?"

"Yes; I do."

Wilfred hated to have to speak so decidedly. But he felt now that he would be a coward and faithless not to do so.

Why had she asked that question? was Janet's thought. She saw that the situation was momentarily growing nearer a tragedy. Yet quite what she ought to do she did not know. She sent up a mute prayer for guidance.

"I—I don't like her quite as well as I did."

"Of course we know women always change in their likes and dislikes from month to month," Wilfred said, with a tremble of passion in his voice.

("What am I to do? O God, what am I to do?" Janet thought. She knew nothing—only Beatrice's suspicions.) "Then I'll ask her here," Janet said out loud, raising her head.

"Of course women don't care about what we call justice. But in my opinion you can't take up a person and drop them again, to suit your caprice. You do them a lot of harm in other people's eyes. You can't just wash your hands of responsibility."

"I see," said Janet meekly.

"But why don't you like her? What reason have you got?" Wilfred persisted.

"How can I tell all my reasons? You can't count people up like a sum on a slate."

"You don't like her?"

"In some ways, oh yes, I do. I'm very sorry for her all alone here, and I wish I could help her."

"I don't understand you," Wilfred said, getting up from the table and walking towards the door. "Now, in the first place there's not the slightest reason to take such a tragic tone. Rudolf said she was a girl who could earn her livelihood anywhere. And you don't know

that she's absolutely dependent on what she earns. I fancy not."

With that he left the room. Discussion was too irritating just then.

Everything in truth was irritating. "Why does nothing go with me in a natural way?" was Wilfred's thought constantly now. "Other people meet girls who suit them. They fall in love with them, I suppose" (he was thinking of this or that young *ménage* of Hartlebury), "and it all goes simply. It's as natural for me to get married as for anyone else. But not only does Janet put all the spokes she can in my wheel; but in this case . . . Confound it! it is so infernally complicated." Which meant that vague doubt had entered Wilfred's own mind. He could not quite dismiss what Janet had said. And yet he revolted. "It's a shame, it's monstrous. People always heave half a brick at a stranger." And Mrs. Armitage, had she gone the same way? Why? He must find out that. Why should he be left to fight it out all alone?

What was perhaps the worst part of the whole matter for Wilfred he never uttered even in thought. And it was this, that a long habit of self-suppression made him incapable of seeing his feelings in their nudity. One moment he felt a genuine devotion to Miss Vaughan: the next a sort of resentment with her for not being more like other people, for being in fact so alone in the world. Through all, however, the figure of the white gold-crowned girl, as he had seen her at the Manor, shone, appealing to the better part in him—to that knighthood which to deny was to deny his own right of being. He had thought better of Janet. But women had not that sense of protecting the weak in their own sex.

(This, it must be owned, was strangely at variance with Wilfred's own last speech to Janet. But not more so than he was every minute at variance with himself.)

He went to see Beatrice Armitage. He was in fact a not infrequent caller there. He would often say, "She's about the only lady in Hartlebury." Wilfred was very far from suspecting that Mrs. Armitage was not only that, but of all the race of Eve the one probably who understood Wilfred the best. She had explained him to his own sister; and Janet once in an *élan* which was not natural to her exclaimed, "Ah! if you could only have married him!" and then at once repented. For there swept over her friend's face a shadow of what her actual married life was. And that shadow few people ever saw.

Beatrice had foreseen this special call with its special purpose. With an illogic like to Janet's her first thought was, "Why didn't he come earlier?" A month ago she would have wished nothing better than to promote the happiness of this unhappy young man. Now the time had passed: she could do nothing. What Miss Vaughan's sentiments really were it was impossible to guess. But from the accumulation of facts which had come to Beatrice's knowledge, she had now no doubt that the girl had or had had a *liaison* with Hector Robertson. It was not that she could even say "had had." At any rate, at the very time when Maggie had seemed to admire Wilfred—to be in love with him, one might say—that *liaison* was still in force.

This to a person of Beatrice Armitage's upbringing seemed a thing monstrous, incredible. And it was this that tied Beatrice's tongue.

Wilfred, baffled, defeated, still ignorant whether it were chance or design, went away as he had come.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was in the Hartlebury Unionist Club. Wilfred had come down after dining at The Mount. There was to be a meeting at the Town Hall—entrance by ticket—and Mr. Haslop, the Unionist candidate, was to address it. Wilfred had been chosen to preside. As a fact, such an honour had not yet been conferred on him, though it had often fallen to his father. Both Mrs. Ingram and Janet were coming and would be on the platform when he got there. The little group at the club, which included Wilfred, Swift, and one or two others, were now waiting for the candidate. Miller, who had been with that candidate to an open-air meeting at Kimbers' Pit in the afternoon, was giving an account of the affair. The miners of Kimbers' Pit were by a vast majority Socialists. They were almost sure to vote for Younger, the Liberal. But their real favourite—who had grown so much in popularity with the working-men during these last months that many spoke of him as a certain future member—was Mr. Hector Robertson. Equally with his growth in popularity among the working population was a loss of position which Robertson had undergone among the moneyed class, even the Liberals among them. A capitalist who was a genuine Socialist was a rarity in those days. It may have been that the capitalists, Unionist and Liberal alike, felt that their cause was being betrayed by such unabashed collectivism. But other reasons for fighting shy of Robertson were now beginning to be whispered

about. And in the excitement of this evening, and on the not retentive tongue of Joseph Swift, the whisper became loud-voiced and clear.

"He's a scoundrel," he said, speaking aside to Wilfred. "Why, when he was with me I suspected his puritanical ways." (This was a purely imaginary fact, which by repetition Swift had come to believe.) "And now you know with all his fine talk it's known he's been shaking the loose leg all the time."

"How do you mean?"

Wilfred had poured himself out a liqueur glass of brandy. He was nervous in any case. But he himself was surprised to find his hand trembling so much.

"Why, you know that young woman who works for them?"

Wilfred's heart stopped beating—at first with fear. But he felt too a wave of indignation hurrying after the wave of terror.

"Young woman!" was all he could say to gain time.

"Yes; a pretty young woman enough. She . . ."

"You don't mean Miss Vaughan?"

"That's her name, I believe," said Swift, ponderously thinking.

"But she's a lady. You've no business to talk of her as a young woman."

Wilfred grew red and stammering with anger.

Swift looked taken aback. He stared at his neighbour. An idea slowly dawned on his mind, and he too stammered as he spoke.

"Well," he said, "she. . . . You know her, Captain Ingram?"

"Yes; of course I do. My sister does. What were you going to say about her?"

He looked haughty and threatening. ("Put on quite the fine gentleman," as Swift said afterwards in recounting the conversation, resentful yet admiring.) Wilfred's better parts had arisen and put to flight his self-consciousness.

"I'd be sorry to say anything against a young lady, Captain Ingram . . ." Mr. Swift began, with deliberation.

"But you were going to. You talked as if it was something known."

"That's it, you see," replied the other. "It's no invention of mine. But they were seen together in Scotland last August."

"Who saw them?"

Wilfred did not abandon his hectoring manner. But his heart turned to water.

"That I can't rightly tell you," said Swift, whose thoughts moved slowly. "For though I knew, I've forgotten. But it's been talked about."

"But it's monstrous! Those things should never be talked about. Likely enough it's just abominable scandal."

"I could tell you who it was if I'd time to think," Swift went on. He was rather cowed, rather abashed and anxious to shift the responsibility from his own shoulders. "Yes . . . it was Burrows. And that wasn't all . . ."

But Wilfred had broken in.

"But look here! 'Travelling together': how do you know that Mrs. Robertson wasn't there?"

"His wife, do you mean?"

"His wife or his mother or *both*?"

"You take me back you know, Captain Ingram, with all these questions. It isn't as if I was in a Court of Law."

"Nobody has a right to say things of that sort unless they can swear to them."

As Swift got more troubled by his situation his accent broadened.

"Ah could tell ye, if Ah'd time to think about what Ah've 'eard. It seems wan week-end they were in Man-chester together."

"When was that?"

"Why, that was as long ago as last June or July, I believe."

("Last June! Good God!" And conviction almost unperceived began to rap at the door of Wilfred's mind.)

"It's been talked of a good bit, I know. Ah almost woonder Miss Ingram hasn't heard nothing of it. For she visits with that doctor on North Bank."

"Mrs. M'Kenzie?"

"No; t'other one. They say 'tis he who saw them in Man-chester together."

"It's an abominable shame, and it's all gossip!"

Wilfred spoke rather to himself than his neighbour. But even to himself he hardly knew what he said.

"I doan't think it can be that, Mr. Ingram, I doan't indeed. I'm very sorry for the young lady. But it's 'im I blame, having her in his employ."

(That hateful word!)

"Here's our chairman," said the secretary Miller bustling up at this moment, with the candidate at his heels.

Wilfred shook hands with Haslop and Miller, unknowing for the moment whether he were awake or in a horrid nightmare. Swift had taken the opportunity to move away. He was in fact eyeing Wilfred from behind, collecting his slow ideas not without a sense of ruffled dignity.

"We must be moving now," said Haslop.

"Yes, we're all ready, I think," the secretary said, glancing round. "Why, you've not drunk your nip, Captain Ingram," he added pleasantly.

"Oh, it doesn't matter," Wilfred answered from his dream.

They walked the few hundred yards through the streets—'twas more democratic than taking cabs; Wilfred and the candidate at the head. Whether they spoke Wilfred never knew afterwards. Probably Haslop too was glad to keep his thoughts for his speech.

One or two other people besides Mrs. and Miss Ingram noticed the exceeding paleness of the chairman. Even to the indulgent eyes of mother and sister these great signs of nervousness on his part seemed excessive. A chairman's duties are but slight. Wilfred looked dazed about him—he could not recall his thoughts sufficiently to take in precisely what was going on. Miller, close behind, whisperingly reminded him that he had never removed his overcoat. He took it off and stood up to open the meeting. Vaguely as from another existence there floated into Wilfred's mind the fact that he had prepared a little speech for this occasion. All thought of recalling it was absurd. He had no idea what he ought to say, what the occasion required.

"We are met here," he found his own voice saying—there had been no exordium of "Friends" or "Unionists of Hartlebury"—"here"—(a malicious voice in the crowd said "Hear, hear," and there was a slight titter; but it helped Wilfred to pull himself together a little)—"to support the candidature," he went on, "of Mr. Clarence Haslop, our Unionist candidate." ("Hear, hear" again, but no titter this time.) "And I beg to ask him to address the meeting."

Then he sat down. His neighbours stared at each other. Their thoughts, their glances said, "Old Mr. Ingram he was never much of a speaker. But this one!" And a malicious voice from the crowd said, "It was 'ardly worth fetchng off your cooat to mike that speech, Maister."

Wilfred felt too great a relief that he had got out of the difficulty somehow—it seemed almost a miracle to have done that with those clamorous thoughts and fears on quite another matter beating at his brain.

Then of a sudden he realised that he would have to sit through the whole of the meeting—to speak again at the end—to refer if possible to some points in Mr. Haslop's speech which had now begun. That at least would be a pure impossibility. But the mere torture of sitting here as the minutes ticked along!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE election had passed, and the heat of it died away. Mr. Haslop, the Unionist, won the seat. It seemed as if nothing was changed in the town of Hartlebury-on-Dane. Borough Councils were held. Mr. McKenzie succeeded Robertson as Mayor of Hartlebury. He was on the same side in politics; but save in exceptional circumstances the chair was filled by rotation. Now the Unionists having won their great battle, seemed glad to yield something to their opponents. None suffered by this complaisance save Joseph Swift. That business about Swift's houses in Byer's Buildings, which Robertson had first taken up, came in the end to touch him nearly. An Inspector of Nuisances, who had notoriously been a crony

of Swift's, was compelled to resign. In all this M'Kenzie was not less energetic than his brother Scot had been. And in their North British patriotism these two held together; while the most conservative among the Town Councillors grew half ashamed of their colleague Joseph Swift.

Some thought, too, that Wilfred Ingram's honour was a little touched in the matter. What they thought Wilfred never guessed. For what was the significance of any of these things in his eyes? Were they mad to be concerned with petty matters of hygiene when a monstrous crime remained undetected and unpunished—a monstrous abuse of the power an employer has over an employee? So he thought; but could one *think*? All the scandals about Robertson seemed miraculously to have died down. Swift himself—though he had a bull-dog tenacity—disdained to make any use of them, or spoke of them only among a few intimates (of whom Wilfred of course was not one) passingly and with a coarse jest. Nor did Wilfred any more concern himself with Swift. Those matters seemed part of the election battle; and the election battle itself seemed to him to have taken place on another planet or in another age of our world's history.

O God! And to be powerless. It was not love so much as jealousy which tore him. The white-clad golden-crowned image to which at one moment certainly he had inwardly sworn an oath of fealty! He thought now that he would have kept it—remained really in love with Maggie—if—if . . . That scoundrel whom yet nobody seemed to want to bring to book, who ought to be stoned in the market-place, but who did go about raising his loud voice with its grating intonations!

And to be so powerless! That was the worst of all.

The girl must be spared, of course. But was she spared by others? How could he tell? Wilfred realised for the first time his intense isolation among his fellow-men—his aloofness from all the world. His partners, who were really his employers—that is to say, the directing board of Albury's Brewery—were interfering more than ever with his daily work. They had got a new General Manager, a thorough "business man," Dickinson by name, who, when the opportunity arose for overhauling Wilfred's books, privately decided that the "Hartlebury Manager" (Wilfred was that in effect) was no good, and that it would be all to the advantage of the firm if he could be got rid of. But Dickinson realised that could not be yet.

Fortunately for Wilfred, a good many things stood in the way of applying strict business principles to his case. First, there was still the prestige which belonged to the Ingram name. Any sort of quarrel with Wilfred would have made Albury's an unpopular firm to many in Hartlebury, and not fewest among the poorer classes. That would have reacted on their "houses" in the town, and they might have lost as much as they gained. It was this knowledge which had made Albury's three years ago come to a sort of understanding that, besides giving Wilfred shares in their firm to represent his interest in his own, he should continue as if his position had not changed. The first consideration was certainly not reckoned at a maximum value. But for the sake of the second—which "saved his face"—Wilfred had been ready to suffer the hard bargaining. And this arrangement was a sort of guarantee.

A third reason for "managing" Wilfred's susceptibilities was that Haslop, the new member for Hartlebury,

was one of the directors of Albury's, and Wilfred's political influence was, it has been said, a quantity to be reckoned with. It fell very much, no doubt, and along with it all Haslop's personal respect for Ingram, after the fiasco of a certain meeting at the Town Hall in which Wilfred had taken the chair. It had been a sad business: Wilfred, a puzzle to most of his fellow-townsmen, became more a puzzle than ever.

"I never should have supposed he was such a nervous feller," the best friends of the Ingram family would say, in talking over the incident.

"No; wasn't it queer?" another would reply. "I couldn't help smiling myself when somebody called out it wasn't worth while taking his coat off to make that speech."

"But the one (wan) 'ee made at the end," put in a third, "that was foonier still. D'ye know, I thought 'ee'd 'ad a drop too much."

"No; it wasn't that, I think. I think it was just sheer nervousness and nothing more."

"Well, he left the army, anyway. But I hope he wouldn't have been like that on a field of battle."

"It *would* be awkward, wouldn't it?"

The opportunity for two or three inevitable civilians to have a slap at anyone who held some of the prestige of an "army man," that was too good a one to be lost.

To Wilfred himself the scene had faded so much into the shape of a dream, a mere nightmare, that it never occurred to him to bethink himself seriously what impression he had made that evening.

But what he did realise (as has been said), and for the first time fully, was that in this town—and why not say in the world—he was alone, alone, alone!

For want of any companion to whom he might open his thoughts, Wilfred could scarcely tell what these were. He did not know, he had never known whether he were—had been—might have been in love with Margaret Vaughan. Had he not been he would still have felt a crying need for vengeance on that scoundrel who had ruined her life. To him was she not lost? The wife of Cæsar must be above suspicion. She was lost to him; and a little lamp of hope, the hope of finding someone he could open his heart to, that had died out. But Wilfred still felt the pressure of her hand and saw the brightness of her eyes as they said good night once in Coleherne Street: he felt the mute appeal to his protection. And it was worse than all other losses, the loss of self-respect he found in the fact that he was impotent. He could not cry the girl's shame out on the house-tops in order to bring her wronger to book. Swift had said, "It's been talked about." But when? Where? By whom? He, cut off from Hartlebury people, was not likely to hear. And everybody seemed disposed to drop the matter and let Robertson go free.

Without knowing it, the essential Wilfred Ingram, the soul of Wilfred Ingram, was like a child left alone in a strange world, a "world unrealised" in Wordsworth's phrase, or like that picture, so tragic, so fragmentary, that Coleridge has painted in one of his odes of the child "not far from home but it hath lost its way"—

"That now moans low in bitter grief and fear
And now screams loud and hopes to make its mother hear."

In knowledge of the world and of men, in the power of making his way in a society alien from all his prejudices, Wilfred Ingram was almost a child.

But if the outward Wilfred Ingram did not know this, perhaps at this time the soul of him did. For at this period he attached himself much more than he had ever done before to his mother's society. They were really in many ways alike, these two, and in ways in which Janet was utterly unlike them. Mrs. Ingram likewise lived almost solitary in the world. None of her husband's friends had really cared about her. What of social consideration she obtained was from politeness only. And Janet, who saw things as they were, who was perfectly simple, honest, and unimaginative, shared not one of Mrs. Ingram's prejudices. To many the older lady seemed pretentious and affected. Yet she was not without her ideals—ideals of taste and refinement, which Wilfred alone among mortal beings seemed to satisfy. If she had no real artistic gift, no creative faculty, so that her Ruskinian copies from Italian masters were lifeless and worthless, she yet had taste. And the sobriety and restraint—the purity also—of those old Italian masters appealed to what was most genuine in her nature. Whether she roused herself to notice the fact that Wilfred was more attentive to her of an evening than heretofore, that they had more frequent games of backgammon than of old, is uncertain. But she certainly enjoyed these latter months of the year 1899.

Next after her eldest son Mrs. Ingram prized her eldest daughter Eva, now Mrs. Newhall. Mr. Newhall (Hubert Newhall) was Rector of Sittinglea, near Hayward's Heath. They had now been married nearly four years, and had one child, a boy. But a second "event" in the family had long been expected. On the 10th of November arrived the news that it had taken place. Mrs. Ingram always paid her daughter a visit in the winter months,

This year it was to be antedated a little and take place so soon as the mother was sufficiently recovered, and probably at the beginning of December. So that Janet and Wilfred would be left to spend their Christmas alone. There was some talk of asking Rudolf before or after Christmas: Christmas itself, it was to be presumed, he would spend with his own people. Janet of course suggested the idea. Mrs. Ingram made no objection, as she would be away. Wilfred also none: his mind was passive in the matter.

More and more—almost without his perceiving it—Wilfred's thoughts concentrated themselves about Margaret Vaughan. Even now it could hardly be called love that which he felt. It was much more nearly monomania: an impossibility of withdrawing his mind from this topic. As he saw her in his mind's eye it was always the same white-clad golden-crowned "angelic" figure which had become for Wilfred less a woman than a symbol—a symbol of what womankind might be if men's chivalry was what it should be. What then was the contrast with the fact! This visitor from another planet become the diversion of men like Swift and Ramsbottom, the *instrument* of such a man as Hector Robertson. The worst of all being that in this fantastic world nobody had arisen, or thought of rising, to right the wrong. Instead of the ex-Mayor of Hartlebury being dragged out and stoned in the Cornmarket before the Town Hall, he went into the building unabashed and unafraid. Scandal had not in fact died quite away. No more dinners were given at Panton Manor: one attempt at such a thing having been answered by a startling number of refusals. This was just in election time. But social amenities were not the least necessary to Robertson. The dinner which he gave when Rudolf

was there had been almost his first attempt in that line. Old Mrs. Robertson most certainly did not miss them. Of all these things no whisper came to Wilfred's ears.

About Margaret too he knew nothing certain. Janet had merely told him that she had asked the girl, and that Margaret Vaughan had declined. The news came after that dreadful evening of revelation, the evening of the Town Hall meeting. Wilfred made no remark. Janet and Mrs. Armitage alike were cut off from his sympathy, in that they had (he thought) so lightly and easily cut themselves off from the much-wronged girl. He did not know how much help, how much commiseration he would have had from his sister's friend, if he had—if he could have—let her see into his heart.

As it was she did see some way.

"I don't understand Wilfred," Janet said to Beatrice once during these days.

"No; I know you don't," her friend answered.

"And do you? Yes; I believe you understand him—men—better than I do. . . . He almost as good as told me he was in love with that—with Maggie. I've expected him to ask me often why she didn't come here now—as he did once. But now he's dropped the subject."

"But if he knows . . .?"

"But is there anything to know? Are you sure? Nobody seems to treat Mr. Robertson any differently. . . . That is, Mrs. Porter, when I met her at the M'Kenzies', said something about having refused an invitation to dinner there."

"I don't want to hear gossip. And you know Robert—one must say that for him—is the last person to in-

terest himself in gossip. Still it was he who saw them at Manchester together."

"You never told me that."

"No; perhaps I didn't. He didn't tell me at once."

"But they might be together . . ."

"Well, they were coming out of a hotel together. He's generally very unobservant. But he had noticed Maggie Vaughan here."

"What did he think?"

"Oh, he wouldn't mind."

"Beatrice!"

"My dear," said the other, with a touch of impatience, "if it will please you, I'll say he minded very much, and couldn't sleep for thinking that possibly one of the inhabitants of Hartlebury had committed mortal sin."

"I don't like anyone talking in that way," said Janet, with a touch of Ingram hauteur.

"Well, well," said Beatrice, "let's talk of something else. Your brother, for instance. If I say he knows that there's some scandal, he may be waiting to clear it up."

"How could he clear it up?"

"Well"—Beatrice shrugged her shoulders—"I don't know. That is the worst thing for us women, that nobody ever asks us to defend ourselves. But then your brother isn't like the ordinary young man."

"He's not very young now," Janet put in.

"We call bachelors young men. It's more polite. You know, in some ways he seems very young to me in character."

"Does he?"

"Yes. And I think you're like him in those ways. The way you broke out against me just now, for instance."

"But you can't think such things don't matter."

"No; I think they always matter a great deal; and generally become tragedies."

"Well then?"

"But you, and I believe in his way your brother's just the same, fancy that you prove they matter by pretending they don't exist."

Janet said nothing, and her friend went on.

"At the same time I can't fancy your brother sitting down as if nothing had happened, if he is fond of the girl. And yet I do not see what anyone could do. I don't know what I should do if I were a man—as there is no such thing as duelling nowadays."

"Would you call Mr. Robertson out, if there were? I thought that was considered just the way to make the scandal worse."

"They used to arrange to quarrel about something quite different—didn't they? About whether a candle wanted snuffing or something of the kind."

"Yes . . . where is it they do that?"

"In 'Esmond.'"

"I remember. In those days they were all equal and could appear to be friends. But even if there were duelling now, Wilfred could not—at any rate he would not—go about with Mr. Robertson."

"But they meet on boards or somewhere, I suppose?"

"Wilfred, so far as I can make out, very seldom goes to them now. I am afraid his work is a worry to him."

"Well," said Beatrice, dismissing the matter, "the only thing to be hoped for now is that Mrs. Hector Robertson will die soon. She's been very ill for a long time. I know that."

Janet could not so dismiss it from her mind. The horror, the strangeness of this history (supposing it were

true) gave it a dreadful fascination for her. Nor could she get rid of anxiety as to the way it might affect Wilfred. And behind horror and anxiety less recognised lurked a vast curiosity. It was this last motive chiefly which made her persistently advocate the invitation to Rudolf. She renewed the suggestion after the mother had left them. Wilfred as before was passive. For the time he was incapable of making or opposing any plan. But in a dull way he too recognised that the coming of Rudolf was likely to make some alteration in their state of inaction and of ignorance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RUDOLF's second stay at The Mount was fixed for the beginning of the New Year. When it grew quite near, Janet began to ask herself with ever-increasing alarm how they were to answer the questions he was sure to put touching Miss Vaughan. Why had that aspect of the matter not presented itself before? Now, too late, she regretted the invitation. For though Janet had enough imagination to foresee Rudolf's enquiries, she could not call up the possible scene before her thoughts or arrange how she must act therein.

And the difficulty came on them at once, during the very first half-hour of the first dinner to which Rudolf sat down in that solemn dining-room.

"Well," he said, in that queer blinking and yet direct way of his, without any consideration for the maid who was present, "that girl of mine, Minnie Vaughan, she's still here?"

"Did you know that?" Janet asked.

The other went on uninterruptedly.

"You ought to have got to know her by this time. Now I quite expected she would have knocked Wilfred. But perhaps," he said to Janet, "you don't want him to be knocked." And then he answered her question. "Oh, she writes to me now and again."

Wilfred, who had affected to regard the conversation as beside him, gave a start. Rudolf observed him by a side glance. But the talk was continued between him and Janet.

The latter had turned very red. She felt that this light tone was unfitting the subject. At the same time, to take any other would be a kind of betrayal.

"If you correspond with her, one would suppose you were, as you call it, 'knocked' yourself," she said, but gravely.

"Well, but I'm not. That's my affair—*why*. But what I tell you is quite true. Why of course I shouldn't have run the risk of her meeting such a fascinating man as Wilfred if I'd wanted to marry her myself."

Rudolf showed no signs of irony in this speech.

Into Janet's mind, while Rudolf had been speaking, flashed that long-remembered remark of Margaret's, "No doubt he has a mistress." She felt more than ever in deep waters, more than ever disinclined to take the matter lightly; as if Rudolf himself were in some way responsible for Margaret's wrong-doings.

Now she wished Rudolf had never been asked, and she was furious with herself that she had not foreseen the course things would take. However, there was nothing for it but to change the conversation. So she began asking after her cousins—Bob who was married but lived

at Milford, partner with his father, and Mary and the parents.

Rudolf put down his knife and fork and stared at Janet for quite fifteen seconds, when she asked these questions. Then he answered them, one by one. It was not till later that, in the hearing of all, of Wilfred whose heart beat and his blood grew hot, he gave one of his little chuckles. He finished his dinner without saying another word concerning his friend in Hartlebury. So, thought both Janet and Wilfred in the secret chambers of their hearts, they had not got much by asking Rudolf to The Mount.

The little victoria was at Janet's disposal now, and that had been a part excuse for the invitation, that she—or Wilfred when he had an afternoon free—could drive their cousin about and see the country. There were some old friends of the family—a country solicitor and his wife living about three miles off—Warren was their name. They had no children at home. But Janet had once been great friends with one of the daughters now married and in India. Further, there had been a younger son who was supposed to have been devotedly attached to Janet. He was quite a boy, she two years his senior. This Cecil Warren got drowned at Oxford, and 'tis certain Janet's photograph was found in his pocket-book. Thus the elder Warrens had a sentimental affection for Miss Ingram, and Janet paid them a staying visit at least once in every year. These were among the people she could introduce Rudolf to; that made one thin possible item in the small programme of his amusements. On the afternoon following the day of his arrival Rudolf made no scruple of rejecting, for that day at any rate,

all suggestions of this kind; and throwing cold water on them generally.

"The country—oh, we've better country at Milford. It's the towns I want to see. Oh, don't you bother about me. I can amuse myself all right."

He disappeared in consequence. Janet felt sure he had been to see Margaret. As a fact, though she herself had never been to the girl's rooms, she had been on the point of going once, and she remembered quite well hearing from Beatrice what were her free days. Now this one (Friday) was one. So it looked as if Rudolf were not less well-informed. Another thing which made Janet almost certain about the purpose of Rudolf's absence was that when he turned up again he was much more amenable on the subject of drives than he had been in the morning.

"Of course," he said, just before the dressing-gong sounded, "if you want me to drive about some afternoon, I'm on. You could not drive about the towns, I know. But I shall do them on my own."

This almost proved that in the morning he had had some purpose which had since been accomplished. What proved it equally well was that Rudolf himself now kept complete silence about Margaret.

Here then were the tortures of Tantalus for Janet—and not less in reality for Wilfred, though he had repressed himself to remain apparently outside the matter. What could that interview have been like? What had the girl told Rudolf? Janet (still in the light of that "No doubt he has a mistress") was prepared to imagine anything. Wilfred had never heard of the fatal sentence. He could not in his mind admit of anything—of the possibility of any revelation from Margaret to this ugly, un-

refined cousin of his. Yet there was Rudolf's obstinate silence to give the lie to Wilfred's obstinate scepticism. What was to be done? He must speak: he must find out something. Yet when Janet had left the two cousins alone, the words froze on Wilfred's tongue. He failed to hear remarks addressed to him. But he could not break the silence.

After all the choice did not remain altogether with Wilfred. He was read much more easily than he supposed, by the blinking eyes of his cousin. And Rudolf had never found difficulty in speaking on any matter which was in his thoughts. He let Wilfred sink into silence after his confused efforts to make conversation. Then he said of a sudden, but without any embarrassment—

"Looks by the way Janet talked of my friend Minnie Vaughan"—(Wilfred, taken unawares, gave the start which Rudolf expected: for he had seen it the night before)—"as if she—Minnie, I mean—had been what is called getting into trouble."

"What do you mean?" said Wilfred angrily and then subduing himself.

"Or was supposed to have 'got into trouble.' It generally means that if you mention a woman, and other women at once change the conversation."

"I didn't notice that she did," Wilfred said shortly, angry but impotent. (Alas! he thought to himself, was not that always his position in this matter?)

"Perhaps you weren't listening very much?"

Rudolf gave this time not a sidelong look, but one from underneath his white eyebrows, as he bent his head over his plate. To this Wilfred made no answer.

"You know her too, I suppose?"

"Who?"

"Why, Minnie Vaughan. Is there anything up about her? Of course in a place like this . . ."

How the sentence was meant to end it is impossible to say. But there was a world of contempt in the utterance of the last five words.

Wilfred got up from the table. This action had the advantage of withdrawing his face a little—only a little unluckily—from the full glare of the crystal chandelier above the table. What was more effective was that he walked to the fire, toward which the back of Rudolf's chair was turned. Till he spoke, he was uncertain what he should say. Do what he might, he could not quite steady his voice.

"Yes; it's a disgusting business. . . . People seem to say—I only hope it will be cleared up—but there's no doubt some people think . . . that . . . that . . ."

"That she's been seduced by Robertson. Yes; she told me that herself."

Crash! Wilfred had almost mechanically taken up his wine-glass while he was speaking. He probably did not know that he held it in his hand, till this amazing speech turned him rigid and it fell.

Rudolf had spoken with his back to his cousin. But not from precisely the same place he had occupied at dinner. The Ingrams had never reduced the size of their dining-table, though the house-party had been reduced by death and marriage from a constant five and possible six to three. A small table, indeed, would have ill-suited the dimensions of the room, and Wilfred and his mother were accustomed to face one another from a considerable distance. When Wilfred had left his place, his cousin, as if to come more in touch with a dish of candied fruit,

had moved his chair a good deal nearer Janet's end. The effect of the change was that a panel-mirror between the windows sent him back Wilfred's reflection. With head still bent and from beneath his brows he saw each detail of the start and the dropped glass. The exact expression of Wilfred's face he could hardly see. But he saw another thing—that his cousin doubled his fist; and for a moment he half expected an attack.

"Do you mean to tell me . . ." Wilfred began, with ominous deliberation, but with a trembling voice.

"I didn't mean," Rudolf said, biting into a candied orange, but not losing sight of the mirror, "that she told me she *had* been seduced by Robertson, but that people said so."

"You go and talk to a girl about a thing like that?"

"Why, it was the most friendly thing I could do. You people go on talking behind a person's back, and never let them know even what they're supposed to have done."

Wilfred remained silent. There was nothing to answer which came to his mind. At the same time . . .

"Not of course that . . ." Rudolf began, and then checked himself; but he could not suppress the shade of a chuckle.

"Good God! What do you mean?" Wilfred said.

"Oh, I didn't say what I was going to, to spare your feelings. But in my view it's all rot making such a row about those things—and mostly hypocrisy."

"And I suppose you went to say that, to—to . . ."

"Oh, she knows my sentiments all right."

"Look here, Rudolf," Wilfred said, in his grandest manner. "I've nothing to do with your sentiments. But

I've my sister here, and I can't allow that anyone with your views is a proper guest for her to have."

Wilfred was still speaking to Rudolf's back. He had never noticed his own reflection in the panel-mirror opposite. But Rudolf on his side cast one look under his brows at his cousin, and for a moment his eyes were rather fierce. He had nothing much to fear from an encounter, in view of his four or five inches superior height. In half a minute, however, he dismissed that idea. He had not answered at once, and Wilfred felt the awkwardness of addressing threats to his cousin's back. Now Rudolf turned half round, throwing his arm over the back of his chair and stretching his legs out to their full length. The attitude seemed to say, attack me, displace me if you can. He looked at his cousin in a lazy fashion as he said—

"Well, I've no particular object in staying. To save you trouble you shall take a telegram down to the post-office when you go to your business; and I shall get one calling me back to town an hour after."

Wilfred, slow-minded and conventional in his ways, was not prepared for such prompt action. He even brought himself to say something of the nature of an apology.

"Oh, well, I don't know that I meant . . ."

It was Rudolf who was inexorable.

"It's all right; I've settled it now," he said, and got up to go into the drawing-room.

Janet remarked that her brother looked deplorable, but Rudolf absolutely as usual. She made her plans for taking Rudolf to the Warrens next day, nobody contradicting her.

"They *have* been talking about Margaret," were Janet's

thoughts, as she went to bed. "I wonder what they could have said."

The sight of Wilfred's face confirmed her in a belief of the worst.

And Wilfred, though nothing of the kind was said, got the same belief. He felt truly sorry for the issue of the evening's talk. Rudolf individually was quite unsympathetic. They did not agree on any single matter. But then he was a relation, an Ingram, and Wilfred with (really) almost a childish trust clung in his thoughts to the support of his family. It was a sort of embryonic patriotism in him: like what an Englishman abroad might feel in clinging to his name and nation.

It seemed to be his destiny, he decided, that blow should follow blow. For somehow he had (as has been said) gained from his cousin's talk the impression that the rumours touching Margaret Vaughan were well founded.

After Rudolf had gone Wilfred could not shake off the sense of self-reproach for the fashion in which he had done the honours of The Mount.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WEEK later he was quite alone to brood over these things, for Janet went away on her visit to the Warrens. There had been some difficulty about servants. Cook had given notice before Mrs. Ingram left, but had consented to stay over Rudolf's visit: then Lizzie had gone, as she always did, with Mrs. Ingram, to serve her in the office of maid; and now of a sudden Gladys, the housemaid, was called away by the illness of her mother. Only three indoor servants were kept at The Mount, and they would

have been insufficient for a house of that size, had not frequent aid been at hand in Mrs. Turner at the lodge. Mrs. Turner had long years ago been a cook in the Ingram family. Her traditions of service went back to days when work was not so specialised as it is now. She could give a hand in the kitchen; but she was also vigorous in cleaning and putting to rights: a strong woman of some fifty-four years.

For the moment Wilfred had to be left under her care. He himself preferred that to having no one but Gladys, the housemaid, in the house. By the time Janet came back Gladys presumably would return, and Janet herself would set about engaging a cook.

Wilfred had thought, at any rate, he would prefer this arrangement. But when on the second night he realised his absolute solitude in The Mount, a something not far from terror came over him. It was in truth terror; but he would not acknowledge it for such. And it abode with him. The ghosts of past years seemed to return and keep him company. He remembered his father's death: his visit into the death-room: how he had raised the sheet that covered the rigid face—he was quite alone—and kissed the stone-cold forehead with a sort of reverence and yet with a sort of repugnance, and tried in a half-hearted manner to find a prayer. What had been the thoughts in his mind then? His father's character he had wholly respected; and had even felt an irritation with his mother that she had sometimes set up his, Wilfred's opinions, in opposition to her husband's, trying—Wilfred saw now—to make the latter understand that his tolerance of all social grades lacked refinement. Wilfred himself had never felt this—save in moments of irritation: never really felt it, but the contrary. Yet before that

corpse which was not a man he had experienced a sort of repugnance. 'Twas his father's image, not himself. What was the use of prayers, of reverence in presence of it? Wilfred recalled all these things this evening. All his thoughts were turned to gloom; and what was worse than gloom, to a vague fear.

Then one evening—it was his third alone—Wilfred roused himself. It was that indefinite fear that he could not bear, giving the lie as it seemed to all his self-training and his principles. "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" He did not think of quoting Hamlet; but such was the burden of his thoughts. For once he looked into his mind. What had held him spell-bound these last months? What else—who else but Margaret Vaughan? And yet—how clearly he realised that too—all thought of marriage with Rudolf's artist had left his mind utterly. The conviction of her guilt had slowly gained upon him. They were separated for ever. And he must fall back once more on the loveless companionless existence, escape from which had been like a sweet dream beckoning from afar. Yet though that hope was gone something remained. The touch before the door in Coleherne Street of the soft small hand that trembled. He did not know at the time its significance; and yet he knew that even then he had made a sort of vow to himself: an engagement without words, as if his soul had taken it on some visionary altar. Or as if the blood of his ancestors in him had taken it—the old vow of *devoir* to womanhood in whatever condition of life, however fallen from its natural beauty. This had been understood in bygone ages. To-day nobody understood it. And that fear which had lurked in the background of his thoughts, was it not a fear of conscience calling him to follow the dictates of honour? If he had

nothing better to put in place of his inaction,, then Rudolf had acted better than he, and was right when he said, "Why, it was the most friendly thing to be done." And she so abandoned, left so alone! No, it was impossible to continue thus.

Wilfred was still sitting in the dining-room as these thoughts besieged his brain. Afterwards the aspect of the room remained impressed on him, especially patches of colour on the cloth, first the red stain of the light shining through the claret jug, and a little way off a pile of oranges in a silver filigree basket. He had not yet lit his cigarette, and his coffee-cup remained in front of him untasted. Wilfred got up and walked to that same narrow mirror in which the other day Rudolf had scrutinised his cousin. It would not take in his full breadth, but it showed him his face paler in fact than of wont, paler still in the over-white gas-light. It looked haggard and strange. The gazer looked at it so long that he became hypnotised, as Narcissus must have been, and felt as if he could never look away, and also as if he were looking at a complete stranger. When at last he came back to the table and drank the half-cold coffee he *was* a stranger. Some transformation had taken place within him. He seemed to himself no longer to belong to his surroundings. Ideas which a minute ago had lain outside speculation had swum into his consciousness and become in a moment familiar guests. It was as if he belonged not to this particular era, to this particular spot of earth, but to any time and to any place—at least in England. And the principles he had to vindicate belonged too to all time with men of honour.

There was a small writing-table beneath the panel-

mirror. Wilfred went to it at once and wrote a note. He had a sense—but as if far off—that he might cease again to be the Wilfred Ingram of all time, the Wilfred Ingram who was at one with his own forebears, and become again Wilfred Ingram, Town Councillor of Hartlebury in the beginning of 1900; and that would mean a being in a world unrealised, a world of which in the essentials of its daily life he knew nothing. So he wrote his note at once, sealed and stamped it, and then went into the hall, donned his thick coat and strolled into the night. There was a pillar-box almost at their gate: Wilfred had only to pass down their avenue or drive—it might be called either. It was but some two hundred yards in length, clearing a little with bare-branched trees near the lodge, but very dark with firs and high holly-bushes ere it opened on the lawn before the front-door steps. Mrs. Turner, hurriedly finishing supper with her husband, saw The master pass outside the gate, and hastened up to the house to clear away the last remains of Wilfred's dinner. This was soon done, and as Wilfred had passed a little way down the road, she met her master in the middle of the avenue.

Wilfred had hardly seen her. But he saw another face which fascinated him. It was the face of The Mount, of the tall white house streaked with shadow and moonlight. So have we seen it once before on the night of Rudolf's first advent, some nine months ago. This night the moonlight was not quite the same. The planet was on the wane and still far from her zenith, so that bands of blackness from the avenue trees lay across the house front, and the quality of the light was more weird, as waning moonlight always is. But The Mount looked tall and calm and nun-like still, only as if devils were trying foolish ineffective tricks against her virginity. As before

she was subject too to passing shames, and blushed when the furnace fires cast a red gleam over the white moonlight.

He had been born in this house. And yet, Wilfred knew, he had always rather despised it for its lost social status, living in the half town of its modern surroundings. Now he felt a penitence and a shame. How majestic looked this face! And within his own heart—he knew, though he would not look into it—what a sea of conflicting emotions, uncertainties—yes, and fears! Might *he* only gain that calmness, that immutability! In his excited state Wilfred appealed to the house front to impart to him something of itself. Here he was alone. It seemed the most friendly, the most living thing about him. And alone he had embarked on an awful adventure—should he call it adventure? Surely, surely this house, which had given him birth, would give him sympathy and strength. Who else would? What else would, if *she* did not?

CHAPTER XX.

THE following evening Wilfred did not linger over his dessert. He had intimated to Mrs. Turner that if she stayed on she could clear away at once and be free for the night. By nine o'clock The Mount was deserted save for this single occupant, and Wilfred sat in his study, or in the library: it was called both. There were four rooms on the ground-floor of The Mount, the dining and drawing rooms opposite each other, of equal dimensions, considerable both in area but looking larger still on account of the height of their ceilings. It was the height of the

rooms both in this storey and the one above which gave The Mount its unnatural elevation from the outside: added to the fact that it had a third, an attic storey, and that many country-houses have but two. This dining and drawing room had at one end (and the rooms just above them) wide bow-windows, not bay-windows, of an old-fashioned Georgian sort. At the back of the dining room stood Wilfred's room, study or library. Corresponding thereto were on the other side first the four-square staircase, and then passages leading to the offices behind. A small wing running out on this side gave the fourth—the breakfast or the morning room, now Janet's chief abode. Over that stood a room which had been Wilfred Ingram the father's dressing-room, and which his widow had turned into an upstairs morning room for herself.

The household had always been managed on a scale of easy comfort. To English people the notion of three indoor maids and gardener-coachman and his wife (with extra help in the garden from time to time) for three persons does not seem an extravagant allowance: though French middle-class households would open their eyes at such things. Wilfred knew, however, that in the present state of affairs it was more than they ought to spend. He had indeed meant to make representations on the subject to his mother, and inaugurate some sort of new plan for the new year. He had not—why? Ah! the answer was easy enough. Another matter had absorbed all his thoughts.

In return he vigorously concentrated his mind on this question {now, as he sat in his study after dinner. He even {got out a piece of paper and tried to make some calculations. Somehow they would not come right. Then a very musical clock in the hall chimed and struck nine.

Wilfred started at the sound. A vague memory of the play of Macbeth passed through his mind. Almost immediately came a ring at the front-door.

Wilfred answered it in person, as the circumstances necessitated, and let in Mr. Hector Robertson. The ex-Mayor was not in evening dress, but in a sort of Sunday costume—a cut-away tail-coat of broadcloth with waistcoat to match. He had a comfortable padded overcoat, but no fur lining. For Hector Robertson had a quite genuine love of simplicity.

“Good evening, sir,” he said shortly, taking off his coat as soon as he came inside the door, so that there was no good opportunity for either of them to shake hands, if either had desired to do so. The truth is, however, they had met so keenly of late over politics and other things—of late, that is to say, three months ago now—that it was not easy on either side for them to meet on affectedly friendly terms. All the advantage seemed on the side of Hector Robertson. He had been the moving influence in framing a report by a special sub-committee of the Borough Council, in which the scandal of Swift’s houses was brought out in a very glaring light. And an appendix taken from reports of the council-meetings showed Wilfred as one of the chief supporters of this iniquity. For more than two months now Wilfred had almost disappeared from public life in Hartlebury. But it might be presumed that someone had told him of the report and the appendix. Now the question of the appendix was just the one most debated. Leadbeater had expressed himself more decidedly on the matter than perhaps he had ever before ventured to do to anyone, even if the subject were the weather. Robertson had no doubt that Wilfred had asked him to call in order to treat of

this business: though in what spirit Hector Robertson did not know. He was not absolutely vindictive; but he liked the sense of power, and was not disposed to make concessions easily. Now he was angry with himself for having come. He knew that in doing so he had in fact yielded to the social superiority of the Ingrams, which he was always outwardly scouting. Wilfred's evening dress emphasised the difference between them. What, he wished to know, was the custom in such a case? Wilfred's note had been polite enough. So, to make things even, Robertson put a good deal of brusquerie in his tone as he said, "Good evening, sir," and set to work to pull off his great-coat.

"Would you mind coming in here?" and Wilfred led the way back to his study. He had a little catch in his voice as he spoke. And, as his face too looked white, Robertson made up his mind that the man was in a real fright, and smiled to himself in triumph. He had no idea his *pétard* of the appendix could produce so much effect as that. He lost a little dignity, however, on first entering the small high study, by slipping on the polished oak near the door. There was a Turkey carpet in the middle, and a skin mat before the fire, but on the sides, and more especially the side of the door, a certain space of polished floor. To save himself and his "face," Robertson sat down in an armchair close at hand. Wilfred had not yet sat down, nor had he in fact invited his guest to do so. Robertson once again felt with irritation that he was socially at a loss. Perhaps he hadn't done the right thing. But then to get up again and stand, as one of his own clerks would have done to receive an order, that was not to be thought of. So he occupied himself with looking at the bottom of his trousers, and brushing off a trace of

dust here and there. It was a heavy frost, so there was not much to brush off.

"I sent for you" ("Sent for me indeed!"), so Wilfred began, but with a certain trembling in his voice that Robertson heard with a triumphant satisfaction, "to speak to you on the subject of . . . Miss Vaughan."

Miss Vaughan! It came like a thunder-clap. But Robertson was not used to be taken at a disadvantage. His combative instincts were always at his service.

"Of Miss Vaughan!" he asked, with a Scottish nasal emphasis on the name. And every accent of his voice sounded the trump of battle. "And what the dickens do you want to know about Miss Vaughan?"

It stirred Wilfred too to a more aggressive mood.

"Yes," he said, with a sort of judicial severity, and then with more passion; "it is reported that you've done the vile, blackguardly thing of seducing that girl who was in your employ."

There was no doubt about the battle now. Robertson jumped up from his chair. It in its turn slipped a little from beneath him on the oak, so that for half a second he had not complete mastery of his legs. At the same moment he perceived that Wilfred's desk stood between him and his foe. He wished now he had not sat down so hastily in the outer region of the room, and instinctively he gave a vicious kick to the chair which had played him false. But at the same time he was speaking.

"Look here, Mr. Ingram—Captain Ingram as ye call y'rself. You'll just take back those words of yours. I'll not be called that by any man living."

His teeth snapped and set on the words, and he clenched his fist.

Wilfred seemed hardly to have heard him. He ignored

the threat. But he spoke in more deliberate tones than just now.

"Do you deny it? . . . You can't deny it," he went on, after half a minute, "because you know it's true."

"You're just going to apologise to me first," Robertson said; and now he had got round to the other side of the desk. Suddenly he stopped with a sort of jerk, a sort of gasp. He saw a revolver facing him. And he saw a new Wilfred behind it—a face quite white, with wild eyes.

"Swear to me it is not true. Take your oath on the Bible it is not true. There! I've put a Bible ready."

It was true—Robertson's hand was almost touching the Bible. This set a new face on the situation. Robertson recognised this—instinctively—though his thoughts were too excited for cool reasoning. It put a new aspect on the matter. He had been brought there to be judged. At the same time that Robertson half realised this, he realised not less that he would not swear a lie.

All this rush of novelty reduced him for a second or two to silence and inaction. In those few seconds the situation had changed. All the *sang froid* had passed over to Wilfred now.

"Well, I'm waiting," he said quite slowly. "Take up the Bible and swear."

"Ye scoundrel! ye mean hound, to trap me here," Robertson said, not losing courage, though the real position of things dawned on him more clearly: so clearly indeed that it stopped action on his part. "I'll not swear at your bidding or any man's."

"Quick, be quick, swear!" Wilfred said, with almost a kind of plea. "Ah," he said, seeing that Robertson avoided his gaze, "you can't." And he spoke with regret.

The other had lost all his bluster. Fear—though he

was courageous enough—had really begun to unstring his nerves; that and the sense of guilt too. Do what he could, he had not been able to look Wilfred straight in the face. It was no mean achievement that he still kept outwardly his authoritative speech.

"I believe y're mad, Mr. Ingram. Put down that pistol, will ye?"

"Presently." There was a wild, yes, almost a mad glare in Wilfred's eyes as he said that; and he added at once, "Not an inch nearer."

And then "Ah!" was all he said. At the same moment the report of the revolver had rung through the room. Robertson had made a sudden bound. Then Wilfred fired.

The big man fell backward, his head crashing against the wall. "Oh, my poor mother!" Wilfred heard him gasp. Then he stood and gazed on a lifeless body.

He stood and gazed. . . . It was on its back. The face all contracted under an effort of will which gave it a great expression of purpose and a kind of nobility. But the hands were half clasped and looked like claws. How strangely, how rapidly the blood had ebbed from the florid face and lips! How blue these were growing moment by moment!

Wilfred stood and looked vacantly, and the dead face grew whiter, bluer. Wilfred never thought of aid, not even of finding out if the man were dead. All this was outside of him. But one thing remained as if it had already been spoken since eternity and through all the starry spheres—"Oh, my poor mother!" That, Wilfred knew, was the part of this night's work that would abide with him for ever.

Yet a sort of revolt came. "How unlucky I am!"

"Just like my ill luck!" some such thought passed through his mind. Even now he did not regret the deed itself. "'Twas worthily done!" The girl was avenged. What he really thought of more, chivalry was avenged: his order was avenged. He tried to buoy himself up with these thoughts. Then he looked down on the *thing* at his feet—late a man that he had turned into a *thing* only. And after all a *man* for a' that: Wilfred could not but feel as much. A thing he had unmade, that not all the powers of earth and heaven could make again. O God! And that last breath—"My poor mother!" O God! O God! So he stood and gazed, and the silence was so absolute that the ticking of the silvery clock outside came through the door.

He must do something. How long it was before this horrible necessity for action dawned upon Wilfred he could not say. Measured by his thoughts or feelings that were half-thoughts, it was an eternity. Measured by the hands of the clock, it was to be counted in minutes. Even now the silver chime struck half-past nine. One short half-hour ago he had not yet opened his door to let in—that!

CHAPTER XXI.

SOMETHING he must do. What? Oh, what? Strange to say, not much blood seemed to have flowed from the body. No doubt there was a pool beneath it, and an oozing rivulet escaped just above the shoulder, running under the book-case, against which *its* head rested. Touch it? No! impossible. Yet, something must be done. Wilfred took his resolution in a minute. He left the room,

snatched up a cap in the hall, and then in the bitter frosty air ran down to James Turner's lodge. The lights were out. But James was not gone to bed. He had been smoking a last pipe beside his dying fire. And, what was lucky, Mrs. Turner for her part had already retired and heard nothing of the dialogue which took place when James opened the door.

"You, sir! Why, you've no . . ."

"You must come at once up to the house, James! Something dreadful has happened."

"Dreadful, sir! Have you heard some bad news, sir? Missus isn't . . .?"

"I can't tell you now. No, it's not that. You must come up to the house with me."

"Could the missus be any use, sir? I'll call her if she could; she's only just turned in there."

"No, no. I don't want Mrs. Turner told. Come alone!"

"All right, sir. Just wait half a minute, sir. Well, bless me if she isn't snoring already. And I thought it was only a minute ago she were here. All right, Mr. Wilfred. Just let me get a coat." He spoke in a whisper now. "Here it is. Right, sir, I'll come along."

And the two walked up together on the crunching gravel under stars preternaturally bright.

"You didn't ought to have come out without a hovercoat, Captain Ingram," Turner said, in a consoling voice, almost as if speaking to a child. Some instinct or some suggestion from the sight of Wilfred's face made him so speak. The other answered nothing. The hall door was open. A glass door led from the vestibule into the main hall; and seeming far away behind it shone a light from the open door of the study. It shone on Wilfred like an

eye of fate. But he did not hesitate; and still in utter silence passed straight on into the room, Turner at his heels. For a moment the latter looked at his master bewildered. He did not understand his gesture. But he saw the room looked strange: his eye saw a chair overthrown. Then wandering round it suddenly . . .

"My God, sir!" said Turner, under his breath. He wanted to ask what had happened, then found of a sudden his throat was too dry.

Wilfred spoke at last.

"I've killed him." He paused as if for a reply: then as none came, he added, "What is to be done?"

"You killed him, sir?" James asked dazedly.

"Yes; I had to." For a moment Wilfred thought of telling the simple truth. But he hesitated, and truth fled from him—"I had to. He threatened me."

James Turner was slow of speech; but he was not really slow of thought. In truth, as with many of the poor, especially of the servant class, his slowness of speech came from caution chiefly. There is always such a fund of mystery surrounding "gentlefolk." They must on many points be accepted rather than understood. James' mind was rapidly adapting itself to this point of view. He had the instinct of fidelity. Therefore *why* his master had killed this man was not the chief question. What was to be done now, that *was*. But he felt a fear and awe in the presence of this dead body. So he spoke as if he were in church.

"We must get it away, sir," he whispered. And doing violence to his scruples he bent over the corpse. "I suppose it is quite dead, sir?"

Wilfred shuddered. But he too was at last nerving himself to action. He knelt down by the body, opened

his hunter's watch and held the case before the dead man's mouth. No dulness sullied the silver.

"You're kneeling in the blood, sir," Turner whispered.

It was true. There was a pool of blood under the body, spreading out a little way on each side. But only one small rivulet flowed therefrom, under the book-case, as has been said. Wilfred started back.

"We must lift it up," said Turner. Thoughts were coming rapidly to him now. His mind was almost clear. After the first terror, a rebound had come: the thought, namely, that after all *he* had not done the deed, and it was not his place to take any responsibility for that. All the more clearly, as a faithful attendant, did he see what was to be done. So that, though still in that deferential whisper, he began in fact to give directions to his master.

"Stop a minute, sir. If you were to get a towel or something from your room." And Wilfred obediently fetched a bath-towel. Turner carefully wrapped it round the body over the region where the wound was; wrapped it tight, so that when anon they moved *it*, no more blood escaped on the floor. But these earlier movements had been frightfully deliberate, and the clock struck ten.

"What are we to do now?" said Wilfred, mastering a shudder. He himself was regaining the power to think. "We must bury it."

They carried it out into the garden and laid it under a holly-tree. The moon had just appeared.

"I've my pick and spade," Turner began, and then he reflected. "It would take us half the night," he said, "with the ground like this. And it must be seen as something 'ud been done wherever we was to go. . . . Do you know, sir, the best thing we could do would be to take

it out to Hanbury Road and put it in one of them borings there."

"They're covered up."

"But with very rotten old boards, some of them. I noticed as some boys had tore up some of the boarding from one and they was playing with it. I noticed that the other day as I took Miss Janet to Preston Bridge. We could put it in the carriage and fasten up, and you could be on the box driving. Only if you could make a reason for bringing Miss Janet back, then if you was seen nobody'd wonder. . . . And it would be an halliby like, as well."

Wilfred thought. "We'll do that," he said.

James would have liked to learn what probabilities there were of suspicion turning on Wilfred. But he decided not to ask.

"Get the carriage ready," said Wilfred. But James saw farther.

"If Miss Janet's to come home we must wash up the blood now," he said. Wilfred shuddered. "I'll see to that, sir," said James magnanimously. "And you must put on another pair of trousers, sir."

Wilfred's part was soon done. Then he came back and hovered uselessly, uneasily about, while James, who knew all the ways of the house, had provided himself with his own gardener's pail, but drawn hot water in the kitchen. On the whole, wondrous little blood had escaped onto the floor. But it was enough to make the whole pail a horrid sight, long before all was summarily cleaned. And the skin rug too was a little dappled with blood.

"If you was to get the carriage ready, sir," James suggested: then he went deliberately on with his work.

"If the old woman was to miss me and come up now!" he said to himself; and debated whether, after all, she would not have to be told. Miss Janet might not come into the study. She often did not for days. But Mrs. Turner was bound to. "However," he said, when all was over, "I've made a better job on it than I could have thought to do." And it was wonderful how near the normal his feelings were now. He carried off his pail to the stables along with the skin rug to hide away there. For that was fatally stained.

The need of action was recovering Wilfred too, though of course far less completely. Still he had managed to accomplish his task. *It* was picked up from the ground. The frost had helped to chill the body. It was frightfully stiff and unmanageable. But all bleeding had stopped. It was propped up with many cloths and rugs inside the victoria, which then was buttoned up altogether, and Wilfred and Turner drove away. There was nothing strange in two men driving on the box of a closed carriage. One woman in Brierley Lane, who recognised the vehicle, supposed that the Captain and Miss Ingram were going out to some party. Was that him driving? She was not sure, for the carriage had entered the shadow of a tree. The shadows and the moonlight were strange, as fitting the occasion: the sense of this, if not the distinct thought, penetrated Wilfred's mind. There is something unnatural in the late risen planet and the long shadows it throws when one is so near to midnight. And along the long, white, empty Hanbury Road the strangeness was redoubled. At last they came to a steep lane running at right angles, so deeply shaded even at this winter time that the entrance looked like an arbour.

"It's here we must turn up, sir," said James, still

speaking very low; and he did so. For James Turner had been driving all the time.

He was strangely alert now; almost unconsciously taking charge of the whole matter and glorying in the mental freedom for the nonce—of one who can decide and must not suggest only. He tied up the horse against a post and rails a little way up and beyond the thickness of bare branches at the lane's mouth. There was another group of trees between them and the upper lane. If only the cob would remain quiet! But a longish absence was necessary, and the beast might break away. Should any other trap pass on the highroad it would be almost sure to neigh. And of course anyone coming down the lane would be amazed to find the empty carriage tied up, and would be sure to speak of it afterwards. What were the chances of this last contingency it was impossible to guess. The lane appeared to be very little used. In all his thoughts over this matter there was one which hardly entered Turner's mind or was dismissed as soon as seen—what might be the consequences to him of his share in the night's work? For the "constant service of the antique world" is still not altogether of the past. Turner himself "sweat for duty, not for meed"; though he hardly had known it till now.

It was a long business. Wilfred did as he was bidden shudderingly as in a bad dream—a nightmare. They had to walk with *it* a few yards up the lane: then climb and haul *it* over the posts and rails into Brightman's Ground. It was of an iron stiffness now. This brought them on to a ridge where from the road they were on the sky-line. But the sky-line under a waning moon is wonderfully indistinct. Almost directly they dipped down on the other side; then they passed to a long hollow, a dip

of land which once again ran down as far as the high-road. The most part of this was in black shadow. There were pools in the clay here, covered with crackling ice. When Wilfred stepped on one and heard the crackling sound, a voice of memory seemed to come from years and years away. They might be heard by anyone still and listening. It was very improbable they would be seen. They had passed two old pit mouths already. But both of these were so securely covered that 'twould have taken hours and roused the night to make an entrance. Now they came to one whose covering was quite rotten and most unsafe. The opening of this out was the last supremely dangerous act—for the sound of the breaking boards carried far. Then the dark hole yawned beneath them. How deep? It was not possible to see. James sent down a small pebble and listened.

"It's terrible shaller," he whispered. "But it must do."

Then *it* had to be lifted neck and heels. It disappeared into the black mouth. A thud told them it had reached the bottom. Yes, indeed, how shallow the shaft had grown!

Wilfred's thoughts awoke at the sound. A horrible compunction possessed his spirit. According to old ideas he was destroying this man's soul after killing his body by denying him Christian burial. At least he was making it hard for him to rise on the last day. Wilfred turned his back to his companion, who had stepped away from the mouth, and tried to recall passages from the funeral service to murmur them over this strange grave. "This our dear brother departed. . . . We commit this body to the earth in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection. . . . Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Was that right? He tried and tried, but do what he might he

could remember no more. James Turner coughed uneasily. "There! I had nearly got some more: it's all gone again. What use is it though? I am only repeating words." Turner coughed once again. He had not the same sort of scruples about a dead man. Certainly he himself would not have killed anybody. But if Mr. Wilfred had killed this man he had no doubt good reasons for it. Now James deemed that his master was praying. (That did not seem odd either.) So he could only cough uneasily. Wilfred awoke to the situation.

"We must go back quickly," he said.

"We must indeed, sir. I couldn't tie her up very well. And if anyone was to come by and see that trap alone, why, they'd think it strange."

The provincial accent of the man brought an indescribable comfort to Wilfred's ears. It was like the sound of a crowing cock in the dark to a fevered watcher. It seemed to remind him that some day again he would be in the world of common things, and this haunted night be of the past.

They fastened down the boards roughly and turned to go.

"What's that?" Wilfred asked as Turner took up a bundle.

"Them's the horse-cloths, sir."

"Why didn't you throw them in?"

"Oh, sir! With your initials and the crest on them? If it should be found?"

"Of course." They went on in silence. "O God!" cried Wilfred in sudden pain.

"What is it, sir?"

"Oh, nothing."

It was the thought that when he said "Ashes to ashes,

dust to dust," he had never thrown down mould. Every rite omitted seemed a sin.

The mare had not broken loose. She had only dragged the carriage against some bushes, making sad havoc with the varnish. James Turner lit the lamps, and with one made a careful inspection of the interior of the carriage. There had been no oozing there. The bundle of cloths he stowed under the box-seat.

'Twas half-past eleven when they reached the Warrens' house. The drive itself, indeed, with a decent horse was a matter of twenty minutes at the outside. The hour and a half which had elapsed since they two stood over Robertson's body in the library at The Mount were indeed but a small time in which to have accomplished all they had done. Nevertheless, as they entered the short drive and drove up to the dark house front, both realised in how strange a position they were. And no idea, no excuse had come to Wilfred's mind, save the vague one that he would say the mother was ill and get out of it how he might.

Indeed, he was saved the trouble of saying much. The disturbance he caused seemed to speak for itself. Though the house was dark nobody had yet undressed, for the Warrens were not early folk. The master of the house had given up his office, and it gave him pleasure to think that no enforced early breakfast and drive into Hartlebury awaited him now. Janet came tumbling downstairs, her hair caught up in a wisp.

"Is anything the matter? Is mother ill?"

She had never seen her brother look so strange. His eyes were all colour—the only coloured spots in his face. The lids were red, the whites red too. He only nodded.

"O dear!" she groaned. Janet thought her mother was dying or dead.

Mrs. Warren was all sympathy. She went out and met Everard, her maid, who had dressed hurriedly, and whispered her to get Miss Ingram's things ready. Wilfred, indifferent to everybody, sat down with his head in his hands, and nobody spoke to him.

Then of a sudden there came upon him a sense of the unnaturalness, the absurdity of the scene. It did not prompt him to laugh, however, but to fear. How would he ever, he saw—slow in thought as he knew himself to be—get through the web of fictions, unrealities, self-betraysals which would weave round him, in closer and closer woof. It was a losing game—why not give it up?

Because he had not himself to consider but his family. His first contact with Janet had brought that back to thought. Up to now, when for the last two hours in the picture of his arrest, the inevitable event of to-morrow (for of course Robertson would be traced to his house), when this scene was before him it was from the deserted Mount he saw himself led away. But now in his fancy the house was once more peopled by its usual household down to the servants. (And in fact Gladys was due back on the morrow.) This picture was far more terrible. It nerved him, however, to fight to the last.

Janet was surprised and hurt that Wilfred should have driven home and left her in the inside alone. (Wilfred drove himself this time.) But arrived at The Mount, she questioned her brother again.

"Where is it?" she asked. "Let me see it."

It made Wilfred start. His mind too was full of an "it."

"See what?" he asked.

"Why, the telegram. You said you had received one about mother."

"N—no. I didn't say that. It may be nothing. It's very likely nothing."

"But how do you know she's ill? What have you received? Has Eve written?"

Then Wilfred's imagination for once made a bold move. There came into his memory—he knew not how—a conversation at the London club on death-warnings, dreams, and the like. 'Twas a time for bold lying; he knew that.

"It was," he said, "an impression I got." (Janet stared, and almost a doubt of her brother's sanity crossed her mind.) "But . . . it was more than an impression. I saw things. . . ." And indeed he *was* "seeing things" in his mind's eye, but of a different sort.

"Oh, what? Tell me. A dream was it? . . . What did you see?" Her voice shook.

"I can't. I can't to-night. Very likely it was nothing. There has been no telegram."

He looked on the floor of the hall—they were still standing in the outer hall.

Janet too looked.

"Are you sure nothing has come? Was nobody in the house? Where were you sitting? In your study?"

Wilfred perceived with a sort of horror that the study-door was open. To his fancy "it" was still lying inside.

"No, no, in the dining-room." Instinctively he got before her to bar the way.

"And the house was shut up. They must have put anything under the door. I can't tell you any more now,"

he said, suddenly raising his voice almost to a scream. "I will to-morrow. I *can't*, I say, now."

It needed an effort to prevent himself breaking forth into hysterical weeping.

"But Mrs. Turner knew you had gone off with James. She may have come in," Janet said, still looking about her.

"No, she didn't know. I say I'll talk about it to-morrow. I *can't* now; I *can't*, I say."

("What is it? What can it be? Oh, he can't be . . ." said Janet's thought.) But she was at least relieved by the absence of all tangible proofs of evil, and had to be content with that. She embraced her brother with unwonted tenderness. "Oh, I *hope* it's a mistake," she said. But at least the signs of emotion in him were moving her to pity. And—no, there was not the smallest smell of spirits. And Janet, who had done parish visiting, was not ignorant upon the signs of drunkenness. It was still with vast apprehensions, but such a bewilderment as took off some of their force, that Janet went to bed.

CHAPTER XXII.

THOUGH in the daytime children often strayed out of the Hanbury Road to play on Brightman's Ground, and there was besides access to it at the top end from Silver-ton Lane, where a dilapidated paling showed many gaps, the only house which looked directly over it was Sutherland's the overseer's. When Willie was at home it was rather a favourite resort of his, especially by night. He did not go there to compose sonnets, though he was in love in the most romantic fashion; less often even to think of the lady of his choice than on some mathematical

problem which had tormented his brain by day. When he was in perfect quiet, he could see geometrical figures with his mind's eye, as a blindfold chess-player can see his chess-board, and, better still, he could see algebraic equations and functions differentiating into long series, and integrating once more in a new equation. These again would seem to turn back into lines and curves. It was less application on Willie Sutherland's part than obsession which kept his thoughts so full of things of this kind. He had already begun to grapple with some of the most difficult functions which express natural forces, and was at this moment occupied by Clerk Maxwell's great work on electricity and optics.

At one point the vague territory of Brightman's Ground turned into a lane—that is to say, without any warning nor any gate, posts and rails began and descended the hill. Following them a little way you presently found a stone wall on the other side of you, so that you were now in a lane, which ran into the Hanbury Road. At the lower end this lane was very thickly wooded, so as to look in summer like a tunnel of green from the road. And though now the branches were bare, the trees shed the blackness of night on the lane and quite hid the post and rails. Willie still preserved from childhood days a great desire to see vehicles mount or descend this lane—merely because such hardly ever used it. It was indeed, save close to the Hanbury Road, in such a dilapidated state that no vehicle with springs could have negotiated the rise. In Willie's childhood it had always been, and still was, from memory a red-letter day when he saw even a cart come up this lane. He had on this night strolled down the road, and was resting with his arms on the post and rails: a black mass of trees lay just below him;

when he heard a carriage of some sort coming along the hard road, and to his vast astonishment heard it stop at the bottom of the lane and seemingly begin to mount it.

As he had been called suddenly to earth by these sounds, the effect on Willie's mind was almost miraculous, almost as if one awakening should find his dream still going on, translating itself into the affairs of day. He knew as a fact that it was impossible for a vehicle with springs to use that road. He knew likewise that it had been the passionate wish of his childhood to see such a vehicle drive up *their* lane, as he had called it then. Now, as if by enchantment, the event was coming to pass. No sooner, however, had Willie realised the wonder of this than the wonder ceased. The carriage had not appeared on the other side of the trees near him. Yet it had not driven on. The next moment, with a vague feeling of uneasiness, he thought he heard a voice quieting the horse, and then sounds which he could not identify. It was uncanny. And Willie, who was not by nature adventurous, had in addition that timidity which comes upon a man whose every thought has been on the strain, and who is suddenly called down to commonplace affairs.

Commonplace—ah! were they commonplace? Willie, not without a shiver of physical cold and excitement and fear, strained his ears. Yes, evidently a man or men were crossing the palings. No doubt where there was a gap between two clumps of trees. He did not like it. He wished he was not there; and, holding his breath, Willie pressed closer to a protecting tree-trunk. Then his heart stood still. Two men emerged into the dim moonlight: they were not a dozen yards off. And it was almost certain that the thing they were carrying be-

tween them was a body—a corpse. Willie moved slowly round the nearest tree, and sought to watch them from between the bushes. They soon grew indistinct. He saw that they passed over a ridge. A corpse, that they were going to bury, no doubt, and, as the ground was frozen hard, to bury by throwing it in one of the pit mouths. Willie Sutherland felt not very brave at that moment. If he returned home the nearest way to summon aid, would he not likely enough run against these men? And then of course he knew what his fate would be. Almost instinctively he withdrew in the other direction down the lane, and then was brought up sharply with terror by a horse that snorted. Fool that he had been. There would be an accomplice in the carriage, one or two. But he could run for it; and he set off. After he had run a dozen yards or less, he looked back a moment. Nothing had stirred. And an insatiable curiosity seized him to look at the carriage again. After all, was it not strange, murderers coming in a carriage? Willie had seen the gleam of silverplate on the harness. And that had a strangely familiar association, for often in his walks had he waited in a trembling hope to see Mrs. Ingram's carriage, which might have Miss Ingram inside it. He could not resist turning back. How like this carriage was to the other! And all deserted! For the carriage had been opened and not fastened up again. His mind grew more confused with conjecture, apprehension. If he went back now, might he not meet those two coming down the lane? But then if he set out homeward, might they not overtake him almost immediately? So he walked the other way, scarcely knowing what he did. Nor did he know how long he had so walked, when the sound of a horse and carriage came up from the rear. There was nothing un-

natural in that, yet Willie shivered as the sound came closer. And as the carriage passed, he recognised the same carriage with a figure—oh, wonderfully like “Captain Ingram,”—sitting beside the driver. What could it mean?

So soon as the carriage was out of sight, Willie turned and almost ran along the road towards home. (Not by Brightman’s Lane, though!) ‘On and on till he left the deserted part of the road behind. What joy it was to turn up Rabbit Lane in Brierley Gate, where houses once more lined the way! They were mostly dark, for their inhabitants were employed in the Brierley Gate brickworks. But from one a miner tramped forth. And at the corner of New Bridge Street he met a party of young men and girls who had just come back from the Hartlebury Theatre of Varieties.

Mothers in that class of life make small attempt to control the actions of young folk that have passed their twentieth year. “You canna carry ’em on your back, when they get that age,” they reflect philosophically. Mrs. Sutherland was still less likely to try and carry Willie on her back; and she made no difficulty of sitting up for him.

“Come to the fire, lad,” she said, “and get a bit o’ warmship. You must be starved. I suppose you’ve been to the theayter.”

Mrs. Sutherland belonged altogether to the working class, and did not attempt to refine her language in proportion to the hopes she reposed in her son. Willie did not answer. He ate his supper in silence and went silently to bed.

In the morning it was as if he had gone through some fantastic dream. But his real terror at the sight

of those two men and their burden came back to memory too poignantly to allow the illusion of a dream to linger. And what came back too with perfect clearness was the vision of Captain Ingram's face: for he had been walking on Wilfred's side of the box-seat, and Captain Ingram's face was shown a moment clear in the moonlight. It was impossible, and yet it was certain, that the man he saw seated there, the "aristocratic" Captain Ingram, whom Willie looked upon as representing all that was greatest in the gentlemen of England, and who was brother to the pearl of womankind, that not half-an-hour before Willie recognised him he had been carrying the body of a murdered man to throw it in one of the disused pits of Brightman's Ground. All the stories he had read of burglars who lived the lives of gentlemen came back to Willie's mind: and along with them a story of far greater literary power, and on that score much more persuasive even to an uncultivated mind, Mrs. Gaskell's "Grey Lady." This Willie Sutherland had chanced to read.

As the day went on came the news of the disappearance of Hector Robertson, late Mayor of Hartlebury, and moreover a special patron of the Sutherland family. Willie himself had no doubt of the cause of that disappearance. Willie had not personally liked Robertson; but he was bound to him by ties of gratitude. What was he to do? Bring *her* brother to the gallows? It was not to be thought of. Yet it was not to be thought of either that old Mrs. Robertson should be left in eternal suspense. So he took the middle course of sending a letter to the police. It contained only five words: "Robertson's body in Brightman's Ground," and these were not pasted on to paper, but enclosed at haphazard. All except Brightman's could be found in the *Hartlebury*

Evening News. "Brightman's" was made up of separate letters enclosed in a packet together. The capital "B" he knew would soon lead to its identification. So much Willie felt he must do. He posted the letter on the Eldon Road, where there was a pillar-box on the opposite side of Hartlebury, from either his father's house or The Mount. But when he had taken this step he waited in terror. For then he realised the probability that when found the corpse would contain some damning evidence against the murderer. Captain Ingram hanged!—*her* brother hanged!—it was an idea too fearful to be thought of.

Thus for days Willie Sutherland went about with his guilty secret. He thought more of the law than James Turner had done. And he knew that he had—though that was a minor matter—committed a legal crime. He was an accessory to a murder after the act. Far worse than that he thought sometimes. Was he quite certain that the two men had carried a *corpse*? James Turner he had never recognised, though he knew him well: for Mrs. Turner was a friend and some relation to Mrs. Sutherland. But he identified James Turner, when through his mother he heard how that night, "Captain Ingram" and James had driven out to bring Miss Ingram home, having heard some bad news about the mother. From that moment there existed for Willie no shadow of doubt touching the author of the crime; and Willie was able by guess-work to trace the course which had been followed to hide the traces of it. To what terrible equivocation did romantic love lead a man! It was awful to meet Janet as he did a day or two later, looking the same as ever—for now all anxiety about her mother had come to an end—and realise that he, little Willie Sutherland, held

over her almost the power of life and death—awful, yet was there not a sweetness too? And his disturbing conscience was laid to rest.

(By this time, moreover, the coroner's inquest had taken place, and the cause of death been clearly established.)

To be greeted quite on the old footing—was that sweet or bitter? For since she had heard about him again at the Robertson dinner, Janet scarcely ever failed to speak to Willie Sutherland when she saw him. At first he spoke to her as of old as "Miss" simply, as she called him "Willie" as of old. But now Janet herself began to think there was too much condescension in this attitude toward a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, and when she met him at the end of his first term, Willie had become "Mr. Sutherland." Always, when taken by surprise, as now, he reverted to his old way of speech.

Janet stopped a minute to ask how long "Mr. Sutherland" was going to stay at home?

"Oh, only till the end of next week, Miss," he said.

"And then you go back to Cambridge?"

"Yes, Miss . . . Ingram."

But Janet was not interested further. She went on her way. Was this sweet or was it bitter? And to think in what an immeasurable debt she stood indebted to him, that she would never know and never guess at till the Judgment Day—what was that? Oh, sweet, not bitter: and Willie watched her passing with light step up the road, confident in himself that not even the thought of lessening the sacrifice he was making would ever cross his mind.

But to be a hero, and yet not even able to say "Miss Ingram" with *sang-froid*—that was hard.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN Janet left him to go to his room, Wilfred looked round the empty hall lit only by the light of his bedroom candle: Janet gone: James Turner too gone. He was now utterly alone.

Now for the first time he felt and yet could not believe what he had done. The deed was no dream—a certainty, a part of the world he lived in! But had he done it? Was it possible? And with his candlestick in his hand he walked in *there*.

It was too a fact that Janet was above in this house, that she had kissed him a moment ago and then gone to her room—as in ancient days she might have done. Those ancient days—yesterday. She, his sister, in the house where. . . . And the floor was still wet. . . . My God! How would they—? Was the carpet new? Janet in the house, and the carpet. . . . He could not think. It was as if a wheel went round in his head. He fell into a sort of stupor.

Out of it he awoke. Mechanically he got up to light a pipe. Then he started and trembled at his own reflection in the glass. And a word fixed itself—I say not into his mind, but into his mind's eye, as if printed—"Murderer." All the letters M-U-R. . . . O God! and worse. O God, keep it back! It would not be kept

back. Now it was the ear of his mind that heard, "Oh, my poor mother!"

Had all his life existed to lead up to this? All his life, nearly, passed in this house. Fresh and fresh things kept coming back to the eye or ear of his mind. His father's voice—brisk, cheerful, above all things good-natured—as he might have heard it any day on the father's return from the brewery in a "Well, old lady" to the languid mother; and then again, "Well, Wilfred, have you had any skating?" It was the voice itself he heard. That father had worked, married, begotten a son for this end that the first-born should murder. Frosts had existed, ice had been, that one day the ice in a little clay pool in Brightman's Ground should crackle under his feet while he was carrying the body of a murdered man—a man murdered.

Yea, and before his father—the whole Ingram family had existed to end in this (for Wilfred had always thought of his family as centred in those born at The Mount). The grandfather—Wilfred knew not much of *Musarum Vestigia*, but he had been proud that it was used at school—and that grandfather remained enshrined for Wilfred in a phrase that he had once heard applied to old John Ingram, "A scholar and a gentleman." The scholar and the gentleman and *his* father, the retired navy lieutenant—retired, be it remembered, to live at Moreton Lodge, near his brother, the squire of Moreton Park—all these forebears had found the consummation of their lives in murder by a murderer.

Why had he taken all this trouble? Was it not perfectly certain that the murder would be traced to him? Hector Robertson must have told his mother where he

was going, and a dozen people must have recognised him on his way to The Mount. The police would call to-morrow. And then what about the stains of damp on the library floor or the skin rug which had disappeared—and was hidden now in the stable; and those cloths there too! Though he had given way to James Turner, he never had for a moment during that night's work believed there would be any good in it. A hundred to one, too, they had been watched by someone on Brightman's Ground: it was not such a very deserted place. Where indeed in all Staffordshire was there a very deserted place nowadays?

And yet—yes—it was right to make an effort for the sake of the family: not actually to leave the body lying here in his mother's house.

His family! Why had he been thinking of the dead all this time, while there were still those three living? For some reason Eva escaped his thoughts: but they took in Hugh; and with a man's experience he saw more clearly the break-up of Hugh's career than any other consequence. He had nourished a grudge against Hugh, for that selfishness of his about the inheritance. But it must be confessed Hugh had made a good use of his money. It had been the turning-point in his career; the paying off his debts and his exchange into the 45th Sikhs: a cavalry regiment was what he was fitted for. The race-courses of Lucknow and Lahore saw Hugh no more now as a gentleman rider—save, that is, in a point-to-point race now and again. And with the luck of being in that Chitral business he had won his D.S.O. and a brevet: would likely enough be *the* distinguished member of his family—almost certainly General Ingram one of these days—would have been. But with a brother hanged!

Of the other two—O God, it was impossible to think of them! Janet, poor girl, gone only puzzled, not very anxious, to bed. To be awake in the morning—this morning—when the police came. His mother hurrying home to see him first again in prison!

The trial itself began to take shape before Wilfred's mind. His thoughts had been outside himself—as if he, an Ingram, had no more a right to exist. He had not even thought of Margaret; because if she were connected with the matter it was only through him—not with his family. Now the trial began to shape itself vaguely—the judge with the square of black on his wig—he had seen that once at an Assize—and the sentence . . . “Ashes to ashes”—no—“Hanged by the neck until you are dead. . . .” And there was more to follow—“And may God have mercy on your soul.” Yes, that to follow. The undiscovered country.

He started fully awake at this. For indeed vast fatigue and the fatigue of intense emotions had brought him to the borderland 'twixt waking and sleep—and the trial had been for some moments visible like a dream. Now he started broad awake. A moment since it had seemed that a black pit yawned straight before him. “The grave and gate of death”—*his* or that other man's!

So roused, Wilfred had at last strength of will enough to force himself upstairs to his bedroom, treading with immense caution, that Janet might not hear. And anon he tumbled into bed to a night of horrid nightmare—where the scenes of the evening played themselves over again or with a hundred fantastic changes—where Robertson rose out of his pit to recite the funeral service—where the judge in court had the features of old Mrs. Robertson,

At last a healthier slumber came; and when Wilfred awoke therefrom a new spring seemed to have been touched in his moral nature. There was this reason, that his thoughts had not dwelt chiefly on himself. Genuine remorse was not there. . . . Only the modern standards, the modern way of life, to which he had never subscribed, made this murder. If the age of all chivalry had not gone there would have been ways, honourable ways, of bringing Robertson to book. 'Twas the thought that none such existed that had roused him, Wilfred, to determine something must be done. He had been stifling in a slough of self-contempt in those days before he wrote the note to Robertson. ("Those days"—my God! only thirty-six hours ago.) If he could have killed the man in a duel he would—or have tried—and have felt no remorse.

Perhaps not; that is . . . except for that last cry, "Oh, my poor mother!" God! 'twas a fearful thing to take human life. What was that poor old mother doing now? Was she sitting up waiting, waiting?

"I shall go mad if I let my thoughts go round and round like this. If I'd only a sleeping draught!" But he had none.

And his own mother. She would get a telegram to-morrow—when the police had come. . . . To-morrow—O God, to-day! The moonlight was still there, but there was a sense of coming day. A clock struck six. A moment after a wailing sound rose and swelled upon the air, a long-drawn wailing sound as the voice of the earth lamenting her dead. And for a moment Wilfred's heart stopped beating. Yet he had heard the sound a thousand times—it was the siren calling men to work at the railway works. Another siren followed, and another: one, could

Wilfred have known it, was^d from Mason & Robertson's works. "My God, my God!" The last day had come. "The servants will begin moving directly. What time will the police come?" How strange, though, that she has not already sent to ask.

This night had undone him. Now when the police came they would find a mere shivering coward. There! Yes, the servants were moving about. And oh, ye gods, a ring at the bell! He waited breathless. . . . But nothing seemed to follow. A mere shivering coward! Why had he changed so, and so suddenly? And how his head ached! What sensations were those for ever passing through his nerves and muscles? The sensation of holding to the side of the box-seat, and of carrying *it*. How could he have ever accomplished those things?

When a knock came at his door he jumped out of bed as if he had been shot. Anon he plunged into an ice-cold bath. That steadied his nerves. And he remembered suddenly that he had to invent a story for Janet.

"O Fred, how ill you look! I couldn't sleep. Tell me what it is about mother."

"It was . . . I saw her lying ill—she looked . . ."

"You *saw* her! In a dream—what?"

"It wasn't a dream. I was awake . . ."

"A vision! O Wilfred, how dreadful! How extraordinary! But . . ."

"What's that? They're calling something. What's that boy doing?"

"It's only Romford's boy with the paper."

"With the paper?"

"Yes; it's earlier than usual this morning, that's all. . . . He is calling something. Oh, there can't have been an accident to mother."

Mrs. Turner came into the room with the paper.

"Seems something's happened to the late Mayor," she said.

"The late Mayor?" said Wilfred, wondering at himself. How cunning he was growing!

"Yes—to Mr. Robertson—leastways, he's gone away, they think."

"Oh, is that all?" said Janet. And then as Mrs. Turner left the room—"No telegram come. Eve must have telegraphed. Wilfred, why didn't you telegraph? We must telegraph at once."

"Of course we must. I ought to have."

"Yes; why didn't you? Why didn't you first thing this morning?"

Janet had already got up and gone to the writing-table beneath the mirror. She wrote a telegram and rang for Mrs. Turner.

For a moment Wilfred felt relieved. His plan—scarcely a plan, but a series of accidents—it had answered notwithstanding. The vision, the anxiety had become a reality with Janet, and she would never again connect this morning specially with the news about Robertson. But a moment after, his relief turned to sickness of heart. What use? When of course the police were already on his track.

Yet—for the family's sake! He nerved himself with that thought and saw that every moment his mind was getting clearer. While Janet was writing her telegram he forced himself to eat a few spoonfuls of an egg, and he spilt more of it on his plate, so that it seemed to have been finished. He drank his tea—that was an easy matter, for his mouth was dry with fever. He broke up some toast upon his plate and ate a few small portions.

And his clearer thoughts spoke a word of hope. If Mrs. Robertson had known where her son had gone—she *must* have sent to enquire before now.

Then the breakfast came to an end. He nerved himself to go down as usual to the brewery. Janet saw him with his hat and coat on.

“You’re not going till we’ve got our telegram.”

“No. That is—not away. I was going down to meet the boy.”

“There is the boy. Oh!” She turned pale.

Wilfred hurried out and got the telegram.

“It’s all right,” he cried. . . . Then he saw that he had not read it. “That is, mother is not quite well, but . . .”

“Let me see. . . . Oh, it can’t be serious. She says —‘Not slightest cause anxiety.’”

And Wilfred perforce went on his way to Hartlebury.

Rumour was beginning to make her presence felt in the town. Here and there a tradesman lingered on his doorstep talking to a customer. Wilfred passed two factory hands who were discussing the news, not in reality with much interest.

“Seems there’s summit of a hue-and-cry after Mister Robertson as was our Mayor.”

It might have been observed that in such words as were said there was no allusion to a possible escapade or to anything questionable in Robertson’s past. And Wilfred’s neighbours almost immediately changed the talk to subjects more personal. But Wilfred was not enough master of himself to see things at their right value. He thought that everyone was talking of that and only that. And when one of the tradesmen looked up and caught his eye, giving a salutation that was half a bow, and the

man's interlocutor also turned round, Wilfred knew that they must have been speaking of him in connection with Robertson's disappearance, and that only a remnant of respect for his family had wrung the greeting from the man he passed. So he tried to avoid folks' eyes. On the other hand, as he passed through the town almost like one who has just descended on our planet, he noticed each new-old sight with a strange feeling of pathos and affection. The heavy waggons cutting into the black clay streets or grinding over stones: the crane outside Slinger's mill, which was visible afar on the river bank: the blackened tower of the Queen Anne church, St. Bartholomew's. 'Twas as he saw them for the first time and yet that they had been in his dreams (in that other planet) for a century. And he felt that he was bidding them adieu as well as making their first acquaintance. There flashed back to him, too, the recollection of what he had felt one night at his club when, left alone at the top of the house, he heard a door bang far below. *That* must have been a quasi-supernatural prevision. For doubtless within a few hours he would experience in fact what in imagination he experienced then, that he was shut off from all his fellow-creatures in some cell. Had not that prevision immediately preceded his buying of the pistol? Adieu then to the four-square blackened tower, adieu the crane diminished by distance to a toy size, adieu the light of day such as it was in that smoke-clouded air!

Yet he would hold on still—till—till grim death, in fact.

"Strange this news about Mr. Robertson, isn't it?" said old Williamson, his chief clerk.

"Is anyone suspected of the . . ." Wilfred began, then checked himself in time.

"Suspected, sir? Supposing it to be a crime, you mean, sir?"

"I meant to say, does anyone suspect a crime?" Wilfred managed to get out.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir, what's thought about it. . . . Some say that he wasn't . . . You hear all sorts of rumours. Is anything the matter with *you*, sir, if you'll excuse my asking?"

"My mother's not well."

"Oh, I'm sorry, sir. Poor lady, sir. Such a man as your poor father, sir, we don't see the likes of him every day of the week. . . . These are the invoices from Brand's, Mr. Wilfred!"

"Thank you—I sha'n't want these papers just yet. I'm going . . . But you can leave them. Yes, leave them here."

"Very well, sir."

Boys were calling in the street. "I won't go out to-day," Wilfred determined. Then he remembered he had brought no lunch with him.

Janet, who had to go into the town in the afternoon, found Hartlebury roused to more excitement over the disappearance of Mr. Hector Robertson. Miss Vaughan's name had come to certain mouths. The police had even sent unobtrusively to find if she was still at Mrs. Chester's. But then she might be leaving later. The general tendency was to think it merely a disappearance of the ex-Mayor. But the view was not shared by anyone who knew the relations in which Robertson stood to his mother. Such a heartless act was inconceivable.

Beneath this wave of greater excitement the news had also got about to some quarters—to Leadbeater's, for instance—that Mrs. Ingram was very ill, dying or

dead. The appearance of Janet gave some surprise, therefore. Mr. Leadbeater himself came forward in his most sympathetic manner to learn the facts of the case.

"I am glad to see you, Miss Ingram. I hope that means that the news of your mother—Mrs. Ingram's health has been greatly exaggerated." So Mr. Leadbeater expressed himself.

"You've not heard anything fresh from my brother?" Janet asked, her alarm rising again.

"Nothing directly, Miss Ingram. But it was understood he was in great anxiety . . ."

"Ah! That was last night." (There was of course the drive, the rousing up of Turner. These things could not be passed over as causeless.) "But we got a telegram this morning."

"Ah, I'm very glad, very glad indeed," said Leadbeater, with a diplomatic suavity, which somehow left on Janet—when she reflected—the impression that he had heard some later news.

"Has Wilfred heard any more? Shall I go there?" But she knew Wilfred greatly disliked her coming to his office; and it was late in the afternoon. He would not be long.

She came back exhausted to think over the events of the last twenty-four hours. Could there be anything serious the matter with Wilfred? That really was a more natural cause of anxiety. How confused his account of the vision—or dream—was! And yet when Janet recalled how he had shuddered at one point—"I saw her, as it were, lying in front of me"—one could not doubt of the effect produced on him. Probably now, however, he was growing ashamed of all that emotion. She had better let the matter drop.

Thus was everything in a marvellous way shaping itself as was most likely to turn suspicion from Wilfred. Some of the tradesmen had of course chatted with Mrs. Turner and heard of her husband's midnight drive. So that the legend of Mrs. Ingram's sudden illness was too firmly established to be rooted up. On the other hand, Wilfred was in intimate relations with so few people that he was not called on to join in the eternal gossip and speculation which Robertson's disappearance evoked. One question he had summoned up courage to put to Williamson.

"But how is it," he asked, "that Mrs. Robertson does not know where he went?"

"Seems she's no idea, sir. She'd been took with a headache or something and went to bed early, I understand. One can't but feel very sorry for her, poor old lady!"

("Oh, I knew, I knew that would come!") But with this news, and still more with the sense of the act of courage needed to make the enquiry, the blood seemed once more to flow in Wilfred's veins.

"For the family!" He began to look upon himself almost as a hero—to fancy, too, that all had answered to his elaborate planning, instead of being the result of a series of accidents. James Turner's part he omitted altogether from his thoughts.

Some other lucky circumstances intervened. Gladys' mother had died. She was wanted at home, and so she gave warning. But her younger sister was accepted in her place—Emmeline the name of her. Mrs. Turner, whose own household affairs had suffered through her constant attendance at The Mount, got leave of total absence for a while; so that the skin rug in the library

was not missed. Janet often did not go there for a week. Wilfred never went there now. Lucky circumstances—yet what was the use?

The third morning produced a letter from Eva to Janet.

“Had she got . . .?” Janet began, scrutinising the envelope in the feminine way before opening it. Then when she had read a page or two—“How extraordinary!”

“What?” said Wilfred, with perfect calmness. All this business about his mother’s health had of course no interest for him. Yet twenty-four hours ago any sudden exclamation would have made him start. He recognised what control he was getting over himself. The life-long habit of reserve and that iron stoicism of his had brought their fruit in this.

“Why,” Janet exclaimed, “mother had had a dream about you.”

“About me!” Alas! self-control was not so easy now. Wilfred’s hand shook. He did not dare to ask what was the dream.

“Eva doesn’t say what it was. But it frightened mother very much and made her quite ill. . . . Oh, then our telegram came, while Eva was writing this. Of course it astonished her. But there’s nothing the matter with mother . . . only fright. But isn’t it extraordinary? That you were both well and both dreamt the other was ill.”

(“My God!” thought Wilfred, “if I could only know what the dream was.”) He was not imaginative, at any rate he had never exercised his imagination. But he had so mixed up the imaginary vision of his mother with the real vision of *it* lying on the ground beginning to grow blue in the lips, that he could fancy his mother having had just that before her eyes in her dream. And thus

awoke to a new terror from the land of dreams and second sight, he finished his breakfast as he could.

The paper rarely came till breakfast was nearly done—often not till Wilfred was ready to sally forth. To-day the maid brought it in while they were still at table. Her entrance startled Wilfred's nerves (anything might do that now) and he got up.

"The paper boy says, miss, that they've found the body," she said.

"The—the body? What did you say?" Wilfred asked. He was looking for imaginary mud splashes on his trousers.

"The gentleman that was murdered, sir."

It was the new housemaid, Emmeline, that spoke. She was indeed brimming over with pleasurable excitement at having dropped into such a drama.

"Do they know he was murdered?" Janet asked, in her turn.

"It's a most extraordinary business," Wilfred said, going towards the other door. But he listened there for the maid's answer.

"Seems they do, miss. Leastways the boy spoke of it as murder." She was greatly shocked to think there should be any doubt on the main point.

Wilfred went up to his room and sat there alone a moment. He had no den now—now that *it* had taken charge of the library. What was he to do? Could he face the work in Hartlebury again? Was it not certain *now* that everything must come to light? Somebody must have watched the burial. That is the only way they could have found it. And then—he thought of this for the first time—his letter! Would not that be in his pocket? Oh, why had he not thought of that?

Then once more he found support in the old formula—for the family! They might in a few hours' time be thinking all the worse of him for carrying on so wonderful a train of pretence. But by his code he was doing his utmost for them. And clearer thought brought some relief. Two mornings ago he had supposed arrest an absolute certainty; but it had not come. Nor had it come *as yet* this morning. Yet the body must have been found hours ago and searched by the police long ere this.

Wherefore Wilfred went to his work with much more coolness than he had done at first. He was beginning to feel sure of himself. And the continued exercise of will over his nerves was imparting a sense of heroism. The—the act was sinking into the background of his mind: the fight against its consequences growing the only reality.

A horrible curiosity devoured him. He had kept himself dumb. Now he would give anything to know how the body had been found, what conclusions had been come to. He seemed now to have split into two persons, as this outward, this fantastic Wilfred Ingram whose whole existence now was histrionic was growing into its part. It appeared to look on and mock the other Wilfred Ingram, whose life was fatally wounded. For close to the ear of the other Wilfred a cry was continually repeated, "Oh, my poor mother!" Every minute that he was still left in peace, the histrionic Wilfred grew more confident in his part and more enamoured of it. And it was almost jauntily that he spoke to Williamson to-day, saying by way of preface, "We've heard much better news of my mother, I'm glad to say," which accounted for his change of manner, though Williamson remarked afterwards that Mr. Wilfred looked very ill. Of course they—the employees—discussed the murder in all its bearings. And in the

course of the afternoon Wilfred received with the same calmness Dalton, the solicitor and town-clerk, who came to speak about the funeral arrangements for the late Mayor, in which of course all the Town Council would take part.

And when Dalton had gone and the outward Wilfred was alone, he reflected with an amazement that grew and grew how in this supposed close social life of to-day men live so separated by their interests, that they know in reality nothing of their neighbours; wherefore no one in all Hartlebury knew or reflected on the deadly reasons for hatred which had lain between him and the murdered man.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THERE were obvious reasons for not delaying the funeral: for the body of Mr. Hector Robertson had lain two days in Brightman's Ground before it was discovered. And now the frost had disappeared. So that the inquest had only been opened and adjourned when this public ceremony took place. Naturally the crowd was immense. A brother of Hector Robertson's came from Aberdeen: other outside relations he seemed to have none. Old Mrs. Robertson attended the funeral. Those, such as the members of the Town Council that were the invited mourners, felt a certain pride in taking part in so important a ceremony, under the eyes of all Hartlebury and its surrounding villages, nay, with reporters and snap-shotters sent down from London. They felt a certain gratitude, even, to their ex-Mayor, that he had brought the town of Hartlebury-on-Dane into such prominence in the "newspaper world." Yet human nature is human nature, and they could not altogether avoid glancing at such hints of scandal as were connected with his name. As fitted the occasion, they gave a weight and rotundity to their speech, seeking for legal terms, or at least such as figure in newspaper reports. As the inquest had not yet been held, they were in various stages of ignorance on the matter, following the contradictory accounts in the local paper. *

"Was robbery the motive of the act?" said Mr. Battey the corn-merchant to his neighbour, Forlong the builder. They were in the long procession. Their carriage had not yet made a move. Being newly elected councillors, they came at the end.

"Most likely. Indeed, what other motive could there be?"

"Poor man! H'm, you know . . . there might be other motives."

"You mean his conduct wasn't always . . .? I'd heard some talk of that about election time. But you know people will say anything."

"Well, well, *de mortis*, you know, as we used to say at school."

"Almost all the Borough Council seems to be present."

"Yes; I'm glad. Mr. Ingram, he's in one of the carriages. There were some unpleasant scenes between them at one time."

"Yes; that was at election time. But I think the families used to visit. Then there was the brother who painted the Mayor's portrait."

"E wasn't a brother—he was a cousin. Mr. Rudolf Ingram: quite a well-known portrait painter, by what I hear. They say he painted the portrait of Lord Marston, the Mayor of Macclesfield, before he did our Mayor."

"I've seen the likeness—of the deceased, I mean. And the '*Artlebury Evening News*' reproduced it the other night. It looked to me a bit rough. Per'aps he never finished it."

"Oh yes, I should think so. They'd never have had the presentation without it was finished."

"Well, I'm not so sure. It never looked to me like a finished picture, some'ow."

In Wilfred's own carriage the same matters were discussed—matters some of them already known to him, for in talk with Williamson he had heard the chief facts of the case. And now the second, the histrionic, Wilfred had shoved the other so completely into the background that he could listen and even comment as though outside it all.

"How was the body found, do you know?" Dr. Muir from Eldon Heath, an acquaintance of Robertson's, asked Joseph Mason, the younger Mason brother.

"The police got an anonymous letter."

Wilfred had known this for two days. Naturally he attributed the authorship to Turner. He refrained from asking James, not knowing whether to think he had discharged a duty to his conscience or not. But the strange thing was that the letter bore the postmark of a hamlet on the Eldon Road, some three miles away: and Turner had had no possibility of getting there.

"That doesn't look much like robbery, does it? What kind of a hand was it written in?"

"It was printed, Mr. Forbes told me; that is, the usual way, you know—words cut out of a newspaper and pasted together."

"Ah, strange!"

"The whole thing's very strange to my mind."

"I don't see why thieves might not want him to have decent burial," Wilfred said, feeling he must say something. Inwardly he shuddered, so vividly did that night come back.

"No, . . . perhaps not," said Dr. Muir. "Then the letter won't help them much?" he added to Mason, "except the postmark might."

"Oh," said Leadbeater, who was the fourth man in

the coach and who had not yet spoken. He was just opposite to Wilfred, and filled with the honour of so being. "I should think they would be able to trace the assassin now. You see they found the bullet."

"How would that help them?" Mason asked. "It's not as if they'd found the pistol."

"I should fancy they could trace it, couldn't they? Aren't they all numbered?"

"What—man, bullets?" asked Dr. Muir.

"Well, so I've always understood. But Captain Ingram would be able to tell us."

"Oh no," said Wilfred. "They are numbered in sizes, that's all."

"Oh, is that all, sir? But at any rate they know the size of the weapon."

"The bore—yes."

"Well, there couldn't have been so many sold of that particular size."

"What, in all London?"

"Oh, . . . London. But I was supposing the weapon to have been bought in the neighbourhood. . . . Of course it might have been bought in London, no doubt, Captain Ingram, as you say."

("Shall I never be safe?" Wilfred said to himself. "Why do I speak at all?") And then out loud he said—

"I said London. I rather meant in all England. You can't tell where they came from."

"No, that's true," said Dr. Muir. "Poor fellow—poor fellow! It's a dreadful business. And his wife, you know, she died the very day he met with his death."

"His wife. Ah yes. He had a wife, I'd almost forgotten. . . . Poor lady!"

Then all remained silent, and Wilfred shivered in his seat. What memories this new subject suggested!

Dr. Muir divined the thoughts of his fellow-mourners. Each face had in fact taken on a severe expression, implying doubts as to Robertson's treatment of the deceased lady. These Dr. Muir was in a position partly to disperse.

"Yes, poor woman," he said, "she was, you know . . . a dipsomaniac. Quite a hopeless case. . . . It's a disease, not a failing."

"I'd understood that was the case," said Mr. Joseph Mason. "And yet, you know, it has occurred to me . . ." But here he paused.

"What?" asked Dr. Muir rather suspiciously. Leadbeater strained his ears, but Wilfred looked out of the window. "What were you going to say, sir?" the doctor repeated.

"Ah, h'm. No doubt the police have considered that point. But I put the case—suppose now someone should think—get it into his head—I say—that—that poor fellow hadn't done quite the right thing by his wife. We don't know her. . . ."

"Oh yes, I've seen her," said Dr. Muir.

"But she wasn't dead when the act was committed," said Mr. Leadbeater, who thought literally.

"What has that to do with it?" said Dr. Muir roughly. "Mr. Mason means that it was a kind of act of revenge."

Wilfred could not avoid a start.

"I put the case," said the other withdrawingly.

Dr. Muir snorted sarcastically.

"No, no. If you'd seen the poor lady you would not fancy anything so . . . romantic," he said sarcastically.

Mr. Mason was a trifle nettled.

"At the same time the whole thing was much more like a case of vengeance than anything else. . . . Don't you think so, too, Captain Ingram?"

"No," said Wilfred. The monosyllable seemed to come out by itself as at a word of command. It seemed strangely abrupt even to Wilfred's ears. So he added, "I hadn't thought about it."

But lots of other people had. Only it opened out such wide possibilities that, after Dr. Muir had poohed, "Not that one," the carriageful sank into silence.

Wilfred did not know why he had been put into this forward carriage, which was in fact the third in the line. But, being in this rank in the procession, he was bound to keep his place. Indeed both Leadbeater and Joseph Mason made themselves small, and Wilfred went forward with Dr. Muir. His heart sank as the white-robed clergyman met the coffin at the gate, and the beginning of the funeral service fell upon his ear: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." His knees seemed to give way beneath him; he felt a wild inclination to flee away shouting, "I am the murderer." For a moment the real Wilfred Ingram had the mastery; but the next he had sunken back again: and all that followed was as a pageant, not a reality.

Till, that is, Wilfred stood beside the open grave. He had walked and acted so mechanically that he no longer thought of putting himself behind, of letting others bear the brunt of this most terrible part of the funeral service. He had forgotten he was to hear those very words, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." And he had never foreseen a far more awful experience still. But now, having walked and stood awhile mechanically with his eyes on

the ground (how strangely the pieces of earth or blades of grass seemed to glide beneath his feet, as if they had motion and he were at rest!), now I say, he suddenly looked up, and immediately opposite him, holding by the arm a tall grey man—much older-looking than Hector Robertson, whom nobody in Hartlebury knew—was the small, withered, pale, bent figure of Mrs. Robertson, common peasant-like, and yet with a certain intellectuality—or was it not spirituality?—in the face.

The two stood apart and really alone, despite all the crowd which thronged the cemetery and hovered outside the gate. These two alone really, of another race from the people of Staffordshire, whom Robertson had come among, not to know, but in truth to conquer. For though he had been sincere enough in his ultraradical creed, and earned a share of popularity thereby, he held that creed, not for the sake of the actual miners and hands of Hartlebury and its neighbourhood, but in loyalty to his upbringing at the Scottish hearth of his childhood. This was why the grey-haired man with the hard Scottish face, drawn with a stubborn grief, and the old mother, bent, stricken, not wholly conscious of what was toward, puzzled, both of them, by this English Church service, were in reality, and half knew themselves to be, strangers and aliens. The Episcopalian burial did not please them. But then Hector Robertson had become an Episcopalian before his mother joined him in Staffordshire; and the public nature of the funeral seemed to take the choice out of her hands. It made old Mrs. Robertson feel only more alone. But her lips moved for ever in the prayers which she was wont herself to say: she heard little of the rest. Only, lifting her eyes once, they happened to light on Wilfred Ingram, whose face scarce anyone but she and

her son were in a position to see clearly, for all the company present that were near the grave were on the same side of it as Wilfred. And whoever had a good view of Wilfred's face at that moment ("Ashes to ashes, dust to dust") might have supposed that he too was weighed down with sorrow, so completely for the instant had the real Wilfred taken possession of him. Some recollection stirred in Mrs. Robertson's mind: she had liked that young man the day he sat by her at table. She knew nothing of her son's public disputes with Wilfred. For Robertson was altogether reserved about his life abroad.

'Twas over. ("My God, at last!" was Wilfred's thought.) The rather indecent haste which at these ceremonious funerals men show to get away and recover from the enforced strain was conspicuous here. Nobody thought of noticing any other. The cemetery was merely a surging black mass in the fading light. Suddenly Wilfred felt himself touched on the arm. He started as if he had been shot. *Now* the moment had come. But it was only the tall rough figure of Mr. William Robertson.

"My mother," he said, in a slow, strong Aberdeen accent, "would think it very kind if you would go home in our carriage. She says you were a friend of my poor brother."

(Ye cruel gods! Who could have dreamt of this?)

Of course no refusal was possible. So little attention did the family of the dead man now attract (the snapshotters had done their work), that nobody that knew Wilfred saw him drive away with the other two. He said nothing; he could think of nothing to say. And nobody spoke to him. The mother sat in a corner of the carriage, her head bent, her hands clasped. What was visible of her face made a curious white patch (lunette-

shaped) in the gloom; another patch was made by her hands clasped above a white handkerchief. Wilfred noticed her now and again unclasp those hands and pass the handkerchief over them, from which he divined that tears were falling from her hidden eyes. No forms of social observances interfered with the absorption of the two Robertsons: and Wilfred had been left to take the back-seat. The drive seemed interminable. But it came to an end at last. The gaunt Mr. William Robertson handed out his mother and left Wilfred to follow into the house. The feelings of this last were relieved by a faint tinge of resentment at finding himself standing alone in the hall.

"Twas for a moment only, however. The old grey-haired man came out, and in very soft, almost courteous tones said—

"She is in there, the poor old" (Ah!) "lady! Will you go in to speak to her a minute?"

(Thank God for that "lady.") By it Wilfred first surmised, what was a fact, that Mr. William Robertson was her stepson.

Death would have been scarce more awful to Wilfred than was the walk across the small back-room in which a lamp was burning to the armchair where Mrs. Robertson sat. He gave her his hand—as a fact, for the first time: she had scarcely seemed to see him in the carriage. Now she took his hand in both of hers.

"It's the will of God," she said.

That affectionate gesture made Wilfred turn faint. He was forced to sit down, and he could not withdraw his hand.

"You were a freend of my son's that's been taken, I

know. And that's why I thought I'd like to speak just one word to you, Mr. . . . But I forget y'r name."

"Ingram," said Wilfred.

"Aye, aye . . . Ingramme. It's grief makes me forget. . . . He didn't bring a many freends to the house. And those that came I didn't always see them." And here she stopped, carried off by her recollections.

"I'll no be staying long maybe," she began again.

Wilfred made an uncertain sound in his throat. He thought she was speaking of her death.

"But I'm left very much alone." And there was such an infinite pathos in the long-drawn Scottish "very" as she spoke it that Wilfred could have wept aloud. As it was, the tears started out of his eyes.

"He's a good mon is yon, but he's no my son, y' know. And he's his family. . . . So whether I go or stay, I can hardly tell. 'Twill not be for awhile yet. And I hope ye'll come and see me again, young man, Mr. . . ."

"I will," said Wilfred, stifled in his speech.

"For I liked the looks of ye. . . . And we had a bit crack together that night," she said, with a faint *espièglerie*. . . . Then after a minute's pause. "And I remembered how I'd seen ye that day going out of the room arrum in arrum. . . . 'Twas when I saw y'r face just now. . . . And I thank ye very much for coming. . . . If ye'll come again some day."

"I will," Wilfred said once more in the same voice.

Anon he found himself in the street.

"Now," he thought, "I understand what the tortures of Hell are like . . . and what is meant by remorse."

CHAPTER XXV.

AFTER her last conversation with Janet touching Maggie Vaughan there was one sentence of her friend which remained in Mrs. Armitage's mind. "I thought you were just the person to understand her," or something like that, Janet had said. She herself would have thought so — *primâ facie*, and in theory. Beatrice had all sorts of liberal ideas that had once seemed to renew the world for her from what that world had been within the horizon of her native parsonage. Higher education, Newnham, a distinguished lecturer there had increased her enthusiasm for "enlightenment." Alas! there had been one result which she never could forget. Beatrice was not precisely good-looking; but she had an infinite charm, at least for those who could so much as guess at the soul's complexion from the face. Had she remained shut up at Halford she would very likely have remained single: more probably she would have married some curate in the neighbourhood whom her father felt he could not refuse — some blameless young man zealous for the Church — but would have accepted with secret dislike: for such a vast number of curates nowadays are just a little "off colour" in a social way; and Mr. Randal belonged to an older type of country clergyman: and in time the curate would have become Vicar of Halford and she have never changed her surroundings from her birth to her tomb.

How vastly greater seemed her lot, when a science First Class and Fellow of Emmanuel offered her his hand. Physically Mr. Armitage was neither attractive nor ugly. But he was the type of young graduate men respect; for he in his day only just missed jumping for his University at Queen's Park—or Lillie Bridge it may have been.

And how immensely different from this shining outlook had the issue been.

Thus Beatrice had fallen into a vast scepticism tempered by benevolence. From her family—her only brother was much higher church than the father and mother—her liberal views had cut her off altogether. She had not wavered in these. But she had grown conscious that they were intellectual opinions only: that in reality the horizon of Halford lay all about her. In the actual blankness of her life, and it was only by her determinately not brooding thereon that the blankness did not become misery, Beatrice's childhood days in her birthplace shone in the colours of the rainbow. It was indeed Eden before the fruit of knowledge had been tasted. The dull church services themselves seemed steeped in poetry: as when, some summer afternoon, the rays had come through the open door, along with the note of a thrush—in some pause of silence—or through the one stained-glass window, making patterns on the stucco wall. And to her father's droning sermon a strayed humble-bee perchance droned in harmony. What then was the use of "enlightenment" that brought so little happiness? But where again the possibility of treading the old paths? Thence what I have called the vast scepticism which brooded over Mrs. Armitage's life.

It was in part this which had made Beatrice, after all, shy of mingling in any way with the life of Janet's

friend—(that Enigma of Janet's)—so soon as she found out *le mot de l'énigme*. None of Beatrice Armitage's instinctive feelings had remained more strong in her than her dislike of loose morals: though intellectually she tolerated freedom of thought on these subjects likewise. To her they were, we have said, as the forbidden fruit with the marks of human teeth in it: from this she shrank. The consciousness of the moral cowardice involved in her attitude was not enough to move her. Her scepticism was too great for that.

But after the death of Robertson she saw things differently.

Outwardly she knew the position of Miss Vaughan was desperate. So soon as the funeral should be over it was certain that public opinion would turn against the girl. The sensation attending Robertson's death had made a hero of him; and in the sight of all England Hartlebury would not balk itself of giving a great funeral to its Mayor, who, moreover, was very popular with a section of the population. This did not prevent ill-contented whisperings from many respectable houses. And there was nothing in counterbalance to shield Margaret Vaughan. The girl had escaped notice hitherto, just because she was so complete a stranger to Hartlebury and all its belongings. But upon the hero of a tragedy beats the light almost as fiercely as on a throne; and now Margaret's name had been on many lips. Wherefore Beatrice's humanity and her courage both stirred her to go down and see the girl.

Should she find her in mourning? she wondered. She did not, but in the same brown corduroy which she had worn the previous winter, and at the beginning of a pack-

ing up. Maggie's face was thin, and blue-shadowed, yet not the face of a widow. Still Beatrice wondered. She had never fathomed for certainty the relations between those two. Would it remain an eternal enigma? Such a movement of curiosity crossed her mind; but she was moved likewise by the sorrow and the abandonment which everything around her expressed.

"You're packing up?" she said.

"Oh yes," the other answered, in her old subdued, matter-of-fact way, which was now most apt to wring a heart of stone.

"But . . . How? . . . You're not going away."

"Mrs. Chester would send me away if I didn't go away."

"I . . . don't understand," said Beatrice, lying and hating herself for the lie.

Margaret turned and looked at her. And in the look was a world of mute reproach unconscious of itself. Beatrice felt a weight of lead upon her heart and a catch in her throat. A generous, a motherly instinct seized her. She put her arms round the abandoned one.

"My poor child," she said, casting aside pretence, "are you very unhappy?"

But even as she did this the voice of conscience cried to her, "Too late!" And she felt that it was so. Margaret Vaughan gave way to no abandonment of grief. She did not realise that the other had failed in anything, or that she had claims upon her. But she had been left too long alone to be able now to throw herself on anyone's protection.

She answered with the disconcerting directness of old days—"Because I have to go, do you mean?" And, as Beatrice remained silent a moment—"No; you mean be-

cause of Hect—of Mr. Robertson's death. It was dreadful . . ." she shuddered . . . "but . . ."

She never finished her sentence, though Beatrice waited a moment. There was an awkward pause, and the elder woman had unclasped the girl.

Then Beatrice said—"I don't want you to say anything you'd rather not."

That seemed to touch a spring. Margaret's voice and manner changed as if by magic.

"Oh," she said, with a sort of cry, "you would never understand! I see that now. You are all so different here. You think . . . you think, because I was . . . as you would say, Hector's mistress, I must, I must . . ."

She stammered in her speech.

Beatrice could not help her. She dared not suggest a word, lest it should be utterly the wrong one.

"Must love him very much. You don't understand . . . I didn't."

"But you were in love with him once?" Beatrice could not help asking this. (How strangely the confession had come!)

"No, no. I don't think so. In love? No."

"But then how could you . . . give yourself . . ."

"Give myself! Why did I give myself? You will never understand, I suppose. Don't men do the same? They don't think they 'give' themselves. They're not in love with every woman they take for their mistress."

"At the *time*?"

"No." And then she added—"And that's what 'free love' meant to us, liberty to change."

"To *us*?"

"To our set. We were Poles and Russians. All except my friend Jenny Stewart and myself."

"Ah, I see," said Beatrice. But she could not suppress a shudder. (The teeth-mark!) Margaret Vaughan, beaten down as she was by circumstances, felt the shudder as a call to battle.

"No, we didn't see any harm. And I don't know . . ."

"Oh, it couldn't answer," Beatrice said, with a force of conviction born in the instant: for, after all, her notions had been that possibly such experiments were worth trying.

"I shouldn't see any harm now, only, only . . ." She stopped suddenly, struck by a new terror.

The "only, only" referred to Wilfred Ingram, whose ideas she knew were a thousand leagues upon the other side. But there was more than this thought. For the past months she had been trying to keep Wilfred's image out of her brain. Now of a sudden that image rose with never-before-seen distinctness, a vividness which somehow included a clearer divination of his character. In a moment, in that one flash, she read it like a book. With that divination, all in a moment, a certainty of the authorship of the murder burst upon Margaret Vaughan.

All Beatrice knew of these thoughts was their outward effect. Margaret became white as a ghost and like one struck blind. Once more she sprang forward to take her in her arms; and pity having vanquished self-consciousness, she did it completely now, as a mother takes a child.

"Don't talk, don't say anything, poor child . . . I do understand . . . partly." The other swayed. Beatrice set her down gently in a chair.

"You are good," Margaret said, in a low weak voice, but with her eyes bent on the ground.

"Oh, can't I do anything for you? Would you like to come and stay with us?"

It was difficult to give the invitation quite spon-

taneously. Though Beatrice knew that by a very determined front she could now and again carry out her wishes in the teeth of the "professor." And as a fact it was possible Dr. Armitage might like braving the gossips of Hartlebury.

"No, no. I can only go away."

"Oh, not all by yourself. All alone in the world. We—we *meant* to see more of you, Janet and I."

Maggie looked up suddenly at that name. Her white face took a sudden flush of colour which soon passed away. She only shook her head.

Did that mean mere refusal of the invitation? Or did it mean that she knew that intimacy was impossible between her and those other two?

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUT on the Eldon Road, in a direction just the opposite from The Mount, lay Hartlebury Park. Among many dreary outskirts of the town this was the most dreary. It looked in the direction of Derbyshire; and already a foretaste of that stony country was to be met with: the trees were fewer, stone walls often replaced quickset hedges. But it was only the beginning of the stony land, and had none of the magnificence of the best Derbyshire scenery. There were many pits too on these hills; and on the Eldon Road the traffic was very heavy. So that even when as now the landscape was largely overlaid with snow (when scarcely any country looks ugly), there were great bare patches of muddy thaw, where many feet or fires or hot cinders had torn the white veil; and on the Eldon Road and in the town lanes and courts which bordered the earlier stretches of it, all was mud and sootiness. When the town ceased you came to Hartlebury Park.

There was a sad mockery about this place which called itself a park. Its parkhood consisted in the fact that it was walled off and had certain gravel paths or broader drives intersecting it; that a few unhappy trees graced it; in summer they were never in full leaf; now they looked to unobservant eyes like normal trees: at not frequent intervals there were shrubberies of evergreens

isolated and cold and bending their sooty backs 'neath a sprinkling of snow. To a sensitive mind Hartlebury Park was an outrage. Without it, one would have slipped into a country still indeed overshadowed with coal smoke but not wanting a wild beauty. Now with these great iron gates to pass and high railings and clean-kept gravel drives and yet nothing, now the country beyond seemed smirched and robbed of all dignity.

So it had appeared to Wilfred Ingram on those occasions, not frequent, when love of change had in old days made him walk or ride on that side of Hartlebury, or some social engagement had brought him along the Eldon Road. But of late he had become a frequenter of Hartlebury Park. In the week-days it was generally a very solitary place. It was too—and this was its secret attraction—wonderfully like a graveyard. It would be after a visit to Mrs. Robertson at Panton Manor that Wilfred made his way out to the Hartlebury Park. Strange to say, he had paid many visits to old Mrs. Robertson. Those who knew of them spoke of Mr. Ingram's wonderful kindness in going to see the poor old lady. Not many people did know of them. For when the excitement of the ex-Mayor's death died away, his mother was little visited. A home with her stepson had been offered to her: she had come to no decision as yet. She had a middle-aged Scottish maid, Elsie, who was beginning in many things to make decisions for her mistress, and to govern the household. The idea of change had naturally no charm for Elsie.

There was a third reason why Hartlebury Park attracted Wilfred. It was (as has been said) in the opposite direction from The Mount; and The Mount held for him now an eternal memory and terror. Since *that* night,

Wilfred and James Turner had hardly exchanged a dozen words. 'Twas a hidden grief to the old servant; and yet it seemed so natural. He would never have dreamt of putting himself in his master's way. He had disposed at his own risk gradually of all the traces of that night's work, burning this fragment of the cloth or of the fatal rug in a rubbish heap, burying that other portion. The only thing he knew not the destiny of was the pistol. And the only reference to their common knowledge which he had ever made to Wilfred was to ask him for money to buy new horse-cloths, and leave to go as far as Manchester to get them. Had James known or dreamt that his master accused *him* in his thoughts of communicating the place of the body to the police, he would have been stung with reproach. But he himself was so convinced that Wilfred sent the letter, that such suspicion never glanced nigh him.

It was an awful thing, but true—if Wilfred had realised it altogether—that he was beginning to hold The Mount in horror. For it would not in the end be the mute stones or trees only that seemed to him to know his secret. As yet Janet perceived but faint signs of this. Her friendship with Beatrice Armitage had grown very close. The married woman would sometimes say that this was almost the only thing that made life worth living for her. For though she threw herself into works of benevolence, it was more to kill time and thought than from a natural gift that way. What would happen should anything take them, the Armitages, away from the neighbourhood? Or take Janet away? "Oh, that's not likely." "Nonsense, my dear, you'll get married as everybody else does," Beatrice would answer, with a sigh. Then Janet would colour all over, and her friend would look at her

sadly and say, "Yes, we can none of us resist the cast of the die, in spite of the awful risks we run."

(Alas! how the innocent suffer for the guilty. For in Wilfred's mind the possibility of selling The Mount had already begun to germinate. And who could tell what changes that decision might bring with it?)

The two friends often spoke in these times of Margaret, who had left the neighbourhood, and only written one letter to Beatrice from London. More and more she began to seem to these two like an apparition or a visitant from some other planet, where all the rules of ours are turned topsy-turvy. If only she had not made too deep an impression on Wilfred. That was an everlasting anxiety to the sister. For he was changed: there could be no doubt that he was changed.

Changed indeed! Much more than his sister dreamt. It was what in religious parlance is called a change of life. To ruminate all that he received from the spiritual, calvinistic Mrs. Robertson, Wilfred found no such place, no place so remote from bygone memories, so solitary and uncouth as this Hartlebury Park. It was not like an old-fashioned churchyard; but it was very like a modern cemetery, as cold, as tidy, as meaningless, and with an attempt at liveliness which made it more full of gloom. There Wilfred would often pass hours, which he was not entitled to abstract from his work, trying to spell out the ideas he had received, or letting them only grow in the garden of his mind. The insignificance of terrestrial things—that was the only certain item of his faith: his business, his brewery shared the inconsideration of all else. All things were empty shows. From that liturgy which he once tried in vain to recall, two passages had

now got themselves written in his memory in letters of bronze. "Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain. . . . When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity." . . . "Man that is born of a woman hath but a little time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower: he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." On those things Wilfred thought, wandering among the black shrubberies of the park with their light garments of snow. He tried to think that with this sense of human nothingness came also what he had begun to believe was indeed a "conviction of sin." Who should have a conviction of sin if not he, a murderer? He did not spare himself: he repeated the word "Murderer, murderer, murderer." Nay, for the first time since its committal he went through all the scenes of that deed, looked in fancy once again on the blue face, took the drive on the Hanbury Road, streaked with waning moonlight, heard the ice crackle under his feet on Brightman's Ground, and stood before the black pit, the grave and gate of death. He became so absorbed in his thoughts that once, when he met a ragged girl of fourteen dragging along a ragged boy of ten, he started as if he had seen an apparition. But ever across the horror of himself which he tried to excite there came the words of the text—"Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain."

The days were a shade longer now, for it was the first week in February. The park-keeper dawned upon Wilfred's horizon, warning people to quit the grounds. It was a little after five. No use going back to Wharf Street: yet he could not make up his mind to return yet

to The Mount. So he wandered forth along the Eldon Road.

At home he dressed for dinner as usual, sat as of old at the foot of the table, and comported himself according to the standard of social correctness which he had fashioned all his life! But these things had no longer any meaning to Wilfred. To have gone as in old days up to London to his club would have seemed now to him as strange as then—in that past of two months since—it would have seemed incredible to frequent the society of Mrs. Robertson. Janet wondered at his silence. But he played a game of piquet with his sister. The mother was expected back next week: indeed her return had been fixed earlier: it was the spell of sharp returning cold which delayed it.

"I wonder," thought Janet, "if he will be like his old self when mother has come back!" Their present existence seemed dream-like, from which there must come an awakening. She could never have guessed that, even while he was handling the cards, she was less present to her brother's consciousness than the solitary old lady in Panton Manor.

"You're a very good young man," that old lady had said to Wilfred this afternoon, "to come and see a lonely old woman so often. And I am sure the grace of God is with ye."

A transformation indeed! It had been Robertson's Scottish accent which always seemed to Wilfred to give a special aggravation to his insolent or boastful talk. Now "the Scottish" in the mouth of this old lady brought peculiar balm to Wilfred's soul.

After Mrs. Ingram had come back, the first thing she noticed was the absence of the leopard-skin rug (one of

Hugh's presents) from the library. That was one of her faculties, the faculty of "seeing." Though she considered herself too much of an invalid to take an active part in the household management, unless criticism counts as an active part, she would surprise her daughter by such quick discoveries. For Janet had been in the room a dozen times and never noticed the change. Wilfred had by this time an explanation prepared, that the thing had got burnt and was useless, and he had given it to Turner to bury. But it was another shock this renewal of the past. He saw too that it would be difficult to avoid sitting in that room now his mother was back: who even from her retreat upstairs seemed to observe things and asked questions. A new burden to his life!

He would go into the library after dinner, stand for a few minutes there puffing vigorously at his pipe to leave evidence of occupation, stand there most like the man in Coleridge's image in whose footsteps treads a fiend. Wilfred never for one moment let his eyes rest on that corner. But without it in a minute or two the night would begin to come back in all its reality . . . moment by moment more distinct. Then he would rush out again trembling, compose himself if possible in the hall, then open and shut the library door loudly, to make folk think he had gone in again, and slink noiselessly away. What a burden was life!

The change in her son was much more perceptible to Mrs. Ingram than it had been to Janet. For the first had not the experience of that midnight drive; nobody had ever fully explained to her the alarm that had been felt about her health (the telegrams of course had been between Janet and Eva), and then again she knew nothing of the history of Margaret Vaughan. So it often is

in life that where nature had given most interest in and understanding of a fellow-creature, knowledge may be as plentifully lacking, and husbands and wives or their children tell more of their troubles to some indifferent friend than they ever confide to their nearest of kin. In this case, however, if she had little knowledge, Wilfred's mother had her own quite private cause of alarm. Mrs. Ingram was so much in sympathy with her son in many points and so like him, that she rarely discussed Wilfred with Janet. For a long time now she kept silence, but she spoke at last.

Yet only hesitatingly on the first occasion.

"I am afraid your brother isn't well. He looks very ill," she began.

"Oh, I think he looks better than he did," Janet blurted out.

"When, Janet? He looked quite well when I went away."

"Yes; but we had that alarm about you," Janet said, and then wished she had not spoken.

"About me? I didn't hear of that. Did Eva write and tell you about . . . about my dream?"

Mrs. Ingram became pale as she spoke and her face was troubled.

"You had a dream? . . . Yes, Eva did tell us about it . . . and that it had made you ill. Mother, what was it?"

Janet spoke with more alarm, watching the expression on her mother's face.

"I had forgotten it. I have tried not to think of it since. . . . Indeed I could not recall it clearly when I awoke. . . . Yes, it frightened me dreadfully at the time,

and I had a violent palpitation: I had to call Lizzie. . . . But Eva ought not to have written about it."

"Well, then, we won't talk about it now," Janet said. For she saw that still it was no light matter to the other.

As time went on, Mrs. Ingram's trouble grew and grew, and reflected itself in her face. Janet was more struck by her mother's ill looks than by Wilfred's. But then she saw so much more of the former. She displayed some touch of the selfishness of a lover at this time: so keen and almost passionate had become the friendship between her and Beatrice Armitage. To Beatrice on her side Janet spoke of these anxieties and alarms at home, seeing her brother's state as reflected in her mother's thoughts about it.

"I wish *you* could see Wilfred," Janet said. "Perhaps you could explain him to us."

"I wish I could. But I believe he sees nobody. . . . Except, that is, he is said to have been very good in going to see poor old Mrs. Robertson."

"Old Mrs. Robertson? How strange! Yes. . . . I went to see her once, you know, and she said then that my brother had been . . . and that he was a very Christian young man. Poor old thing! I ought to have gone again, but I could find nothing to say. . . . It *is* good of Wilfred. . . . What can he find to talk about to her? . . . Why did you smile?" she asked suddenly.

"I'm sorry. I couldn't explain. Something crossed my mind. . . . You're like my father in some ways," Beatrice added inconsequently.

"What *do* you mean?"

"You church people are all so much alike. . . ."

"But you're a . . ."

"Yes. But as I've told you often enough, only a

‘customary’ churchwoman. My father, like you, was sincerely blind to the possibility of religion outside the church.”

“What has that got to do with Wilfred? He’s the same views that I have.”

“Has he?”

“I think so—surely. But tell me what you meant?”

“Oh, I know nothing. Only that good old lady at the Manor—I can’t find anything to talk to her about either, and it’s no use my going, I feel. But there is one subject which interests her—that is religion. If she thinks Wi—your brother ‘a Christian young man,’ she must have talked about it with him. And I put the case that she may have what she would call ‘converted him,’ or thinks she has or will do.”

“How strange!” said Janet, and said no more on the subject. It gave her too much food for reflection to admit of speech. If Beatrice were right, too, what supernatural divination had she not shown. And how had come to her that insight wherever Wilfred was concerned? Again, would it be possible to explain these notions to the mother? There was the fact that Mrs. Ingram was visibly working herself into an illness on Wilfred’s account. Yet once more there was nothing tangible in Wilfred’s conduct which could be remonstrated against. He went through the same routine as of old. If he began to look less smart and visibly cared less about his appearance, about his “gentlemanliness” even a trifle less, he did no outrage to his duties. He played backgammon with his mother after dinner, wrapped mostly in impenetrable silence. Janet—this again came from Beatrice—got some hint either that Wilfred was neglecting his business or that

this was becoming slack. Maybe after all that last was the cause of all their trouble.

"I'm afraid Wilfred's worried about his work," she said to her mother. This was a month after Mrs. Ingram's return. The mother was shutting herself up more and more, and Janet saw little of her except at the meals they shared. Wilfred now scarcely ever came home to tea.

Mrs. Ingram looked at her daughter almost wildly, and kept silence for a minute. Then she spoke.

"Oh, it's worse than that," she said. And she groaned, twisting her hands.

"Mother! What? How do you know? Is he ill? Has he told you anything?"

"It's worse than that, Janet." Mrs. Ingram seemed to have mastered herself in some degree. She looked her daughter full in the face and had a certain dignity and deliberation in her speech. "That dream of mine was a prophecy. It's coming true."

"What was your dream?" Janet broke in. But the other went on uninterruptedly.

"It was not very clear when I awoke. But I know it had been this, that Wilfred had . . ."—her voice trembled to tears, she could hardly finish—"gone out of his mind."

"O mother!" Janet covered her face with her hands.

"I think," said Mrs. Ingram, in the same voice, "I dreamt that in a fit of madness he had . . . killed someone."

"Oh!" It came out not as an exclamation but a cry. "It was only a dream. Why do you think about such a thing?"

"Because, Janet"—Mrs. Ingram spoke solemnly—"I

know the signs. You know that my uncle Edward Burrows did go out of his mind."

"I'd forgotten. But he was only your mother's brother. Every family—almost—has had *some* relation . . ." She would not pronounce the awful word "mad."

The mother was weeping silently. "Oh, my son," she said, in the words of David, but only half aloud. She would not even then allow of sympathy, and in a moment she had recovered a certain graveness of demeanour.

"Perhaps I was wrong to speak of this. . . ." ("Oh no," from Janet.) "We must," she went on, without paying attention, "banish this as much as possible from our minds. It would indeed be foolish to be influenced by a dream."

"Are you sure," said Janet, catching at this straw, "that when you were with Eva something didn't make you think of Uncle Edward?"

But Mrs. Ingram seemed plunged in her own thoughts and made no answer.

All this did not make life at The Mount easier for Wilfred Ingram. He had a vague sense that he was being watched by his womenkind. "Did they . . ."—he sometimes wondered—"had they found out anything—any indication, however slight, which they could not banish from their thoughts?" *He* too had not forgotten the story about his mother's dream: not for worlds would he have asked to know more or do aught to bring it back into her mind. But he brooded on it. *Suppose* it had been a vision of . . . of the truth.

Another cause of anxiety which filtered down to him was that James Turner was becoming strange in his conduct. Mrs. Turner spoke of it to Janet. Was the faith-

ful servant taking to drink in his old age? the women speculated. And Wilfred thought—suppose he were to talk in his sleep!

The truth is his doings of that night, which had been so energetic and methodical, had in the rebound produced more effect on Turner than might have been imagined. But worst of all was it to realise that for only result they had removed his young master even farther from his way than before. The Turners had arrived at that critical stage in the life of working people when the youngest of their children has grown up and been placed out in the world, and the house has grown empty and dull, and there is no great motive for industry and temperance. Turner's industry was as indefatigable as ever. But the other virtue seemed likely to break down.

"O God," Wilfred would say to himself, "I can't stand this life! I shall go mad. I shall go mad!"

'Twas on some milder evening at the end of February when the others having gone to bed he would put on his overcoat and stroll out for a last pipe. (He could hardly get a proper smoke indoors nowadays that his own room was shut to him.) Then he would look up into the sphinx-like face of The Mount as if hoping to find a solution there. There was no moon now. But the stars shone, only disappearing now and again, one after the other, as an invisible drift of cloud passed athwart the sky. Still in the pale light the house front showed white, now less like the face of a living nun than of a dead one, save when as of old the furnace fires opposite leapt up and the red blush passed across her face.

Like two hostile beings they gazed on one another: Wilfred on the front of The Mount, the house back again on him. He remembered how he had never (since quite

his childhood) thoroughly liked his home. The sense of those black roads all round about and the squalid workmen's houses near irked him; seemed to deprive his lungs of air. And now that the house had become a haunt of terrors, what reason was there that he and it should continue to belong to one another? No, *that* chain at least must be broken. It must. It must. His very reason hung on that. Compelled to live another half year in the house, with *that room* always in it, he would go mad.

Yet he could not disguise what an awful blow he was preparing for his mother and for Janet. Of course he could find an excuse. For that matter, it might in any case become a necessity to sell The Mount; for he was threatened with endless troubles in his business. But it would be an awful blow to them.

And in one aspect no small blow to himself. What memories were not enshrined in that house. And Wilfred remembered how on *that* very night he had heard as with corporeal ears the voice of his father. "Well, old lady!" "Well, Wilfred, did you get any skating?" Tears rushed to his eyes as he thought of that voice, that presence. Everything, everything was falling to pieces. Why was he not dead? "Why do you not speak or give some sign?" he thought, almost cried it in words, looking at the dim white face—unmoved. But then he recovered himself. "Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DR. ARMITAGE coming home one afternoon earlier than usual found his wife staring into a bookshelf in the corner of the drawing-room and furtively wiping her eyes. She had taken this position, not as expecting to be surprised by him, but—a lesser evil—in view of a chance irruption.

“What on earth’s the matter?” he asked.

“Nothing very important,” she answered, without turning round, but unable to take the trace of tears from her voice.

“I didn’t ask what very important was the matter, but *what* was the matter? However, you needn’t tell me if you don’t choose,” and he left the room, banging the door.

After which little amenities—and such occurred almost every day—the thought of the desolation of her life, if Janet Ingram departed, was not lessened for Beatrice Armitage. She had Janet’s name only in her thoughts. But behind her affection for the sister there lay implanted a tender interest in Wilfred Ingram. Beatrice saw and had seen not much of Wilfred: more, however, than any woman outside his family saw of him. Wilfred, moreover, represented all those reactionary ideas from which Beatrice Armitage had broken away. But then those same ideas were in her blood; and reactionary ideas are sometimes accompanied by better manners than modern ones. At

all events Beatrice Armitage could never imagine Wilfred speaking to a woman as Dr. Armitage spoke to her, or banging doors in her presence because he was in a bad temper.

Much more than she knew Beatrice clung to this picture of a courteous English gentleman to which her life was not yet quite a stranger. Her father too had been always courteous, though difficult to live with in some ways, from the rigidity of certain of his ideas. Ah, it was not everything, as she had once deemed, to be in the movement, in touch with modern thought. She indeed began to shrink from its tenets; and, in that he detected some of the shrinking, Dr. Armitage proclaimed them with more intolerance than ever before.

Wilfred indeed was not going away. But once The Mount sold and Janet departed, he too would be lost to her society, to all Hartlebury society. He went scarcely anywhere now—save, of course, to Panton Manor. Old Mrs. Robertson's departure, which had been supposed imminent, was indefinitely deferred: people wondered why. Was it through the supremacy of Elsie, who might well consider that, until the hour sounded for her own retirement from work and return to her native village in Dumbarton, any change would be worse for her. Or was it on account of Mr. Wilfred Ingram? Hartlebury had at last taken notice of Wilfred's strange frequentation of Panton Manor. At first this was accounted an unexpected proof of Mr. Ingram's goodness of heart. So that while their townsman withdrew himself more and more from other intimacies, the folk of Hartlebury were inclined to show him extra respect and consideration. As the months went by, Wilfred's charity began to seem exaggerated and unnecessary: Wilfred was less esteemed. He began to

pass for an eccentric; and some folks suspected he had got some kind of "religious mania." They would have been confirmed in their opinion had they known that the time which he and Mrs. Robertson spent together was chiefly taken up with readings in the Bible by the latter, with spectacles on nose and in her slow Scottish accent. Wilfred himself believed that it was religious edification which he got from those readings; and he had a vague feeling that he was little by little purging his crime before the heavenly judgment-seat. In reality 'twas rather distraction from thought which these readings brought him, and the soothing sense of greatness which springs from the repetition of a lofty prose. The recital lost nothing by Mrs. Robertson's Scottish speech; for though in common affairs it seemed bizarre and tedious to an English ear, to this stately language it was well adapted. And there was no hesitation in her delivery. Though she set spectacles on nose for her reading, the old lady could almost have dispensed with the printed page.

"There's something queer about it," said Mr. Miller, junior. And then he remained silent, absorbed in his reflections.

"He was always a queer chap to my mind," said Dodson, another member of the Unionist Club. "I never could make 'im out." And Dodson, who was not reflective, let it stay at that, as he would have said.

"Not like his father wan bit," said an old member. "I had the greatest esteem for the late Mr. Ingram. He was a loss to Hartlebury *and* to the Unionist cause."

Mr. Robert Miller, junior, remained lost in thought: what was the tendency of his reflections he communicated to nobody.

At The Mount, on the other hand, the first terrors excited by Wilfred's conduct had died away. At all events he remained the same. He had found plausible reasons enough why their household must be broken up. The mother and Janet had, of course, their fixed income secured by the shares in Albury's. The plan decided on was that they should take a little house not far from Sittinglea. And if Janet was to lose her best friend (who of course had promised to come on a visit), she had the prospect of living near her sister again, and to the little nephew and the niece of six months whom she had not yet seen. Moreover, Hugh was expected home in the autumn. So the future was not wholly dark for these two. Wilfred, though he never communicated this, had received notice from his directors that his services were to terminate with the year. Already his successor was installed as assistant manager: and to save his feelings nothing was told publicly about this decision. He would have a small pension, but that would be his sole means of livelihood, and that would last only a term of years. Moreover, even out of this pension he would have to pay something to his mother to make up the income which had been hers for life.

Uncle John had to have these arrangements explained to him. The tradition in the family (quite justified, moreover) had been that Wilfred Ingram, the father, was the most energetic, business-like and prosperous of all their house. And Uncle John had assumed without much enquiry that Wilfred had succeeded to his father's talents as well as his wealth. A revelation of the actual state of affairs came as a thunderclap.

He had indeed known that through the market fall in the shares the capital in which Mrs. Ingram had a life-

interest was not now wholly represented; that a portion of her income, but less than the income on Wilfred's ultimate share, came out of her son's gains. That seemed a trifling matter.

"But suppose your pension should determine before the death of your mother?" he asked Wilfred.

"I must try and find something, of course," said the other gloomily.

"I'd no idea of that," Uncle John said, rubbing his forehead; "that your business had passed over to Albury's altogether. No idea——" And there was reproach in his tone. But Wilfred did not consider it necessary to answer. ("Man walketh in a vain shadow." . . . What did they matter—apologies or explanation?)

"Try and find something!" It was a phrase, but it had no meaning. What could he find? He knew that he had still too much pride to go seeking an employment among the manufacturers of Hartlebury; though in other ways his old pride had left him. He was growing careless, he would soon be shabby in his dress. As for what had once been the delight of his life, Wilfred never dreamt now of running up to London. How could he have borne the careless smoking-room talk of former times? He had quite made up his mind to resign his club membership when the year came to an end.

For the winter would come. That thought was the most terrible to him—the winter, with its hard ground and its moonlight, and the ice crackling beneath one's feet.

James Turner had to be told of the projected sale of The Mount. The time fixed on for the sale was when autumn was well set in and the holidays fully over. Not for a fortune would Wilfred have passed another winter

in the house. It had been settled what to do for Turner. The occasion on which Wilfred explained these arrangements was the first that might be called a conversation which these two had had for six months. Turner heard all the details, and the amount of his weekly allowance, looking at his feet that rested on a spade.

"Thank you greatly, sir," he answered, in great fear lest his master should think he made any claims for his services on a certain night, but at the same time with no idea of refusing what was justly due.

Turner was not yet sixty. He might be said to have been country born and bred: for Bartley End, even fifty years ago, was quite a rural place. Nobody would suppose so to-day. This is why Wilfred, in asking after his plans, assumed that when The Mount was abandoned James and his wife would turn their backs on Hartlebury. Such he found was not their intention.

"You see it's this way, sir," the old servant explained. "I've got tutthree little houses down there"—that meant Bartley End—"in Rainbow Row, and they're not all let. So I suppose we'll have to go and live in one of them, the missis and I. . . . Well, I don't know but we wouldn't miss the gas-lamps now after all these years. Mrs. Turner she's said to me sometimes, 'I'd be afraid to go and live out quite away from everybody, and the roads that dark,' she'd say. And I believe she would now. . . . They tell me they're going to carry the tramway on to Bartley End. . . . That'll be a con-ven-i-ence for her. She likes going to the theayter once or twice that we've been."

He spoke this speech looking down upon his foot. For a moment the Wilfred of old days awoke in revolt. What a picture was this! A man who had been nursed

in rural solitudes. (How often had he told "Master Wilfred," while Wilfred was still a boy, what an event for them was the meet at the Black Lion, which took place once or twice in a season!) And now he was congratulating himself on going to live on a tram-line! O gods of rural peace, where are your powers? But in a moment that revolt had died down. Wilfred himself now could not rove about the country, and was almost afraid to wander there alone, afraid not indeed of its solitude but of its beauties. The songs of birds, the whispering of heavy summer leaves, the flashing of water in the sunlight: these things frightened him now, for they spoke of innocence and peace. But the black, smoke-laden shrubs and the trim, deserted alleys, the cemetery look of Hartlebury Park did not frighten him. He found another sort of peace there, the peace of death.

Eva had been written to: Eva had found a house within a mile of their vicarage and in the parish of Sittinglea. "I shall never be able to go to her!" Mrs. Ingram said complainingly. (Now that she was more easy in her mind about Wilfred, her old faculty for complaining was coming back to her.) For alas! she would have to give up her pony-carriage now. But the Reverend Hubert Newhall for his part considered it just the right distance. The move was made in September. Wilfred went with them to help in the settling in. "Don't come," his mother had begged, "if it interferes with your work." For it was the loss of trade which Wilfred in his explanations had made responsible for the resolution he had been obliged to take. And apart from these explanations rumour had reached even her ears how little business

Wilfred seemed to be doing now. She never imagined that her son was already laid on the shelf.

The final departure from Hartlebury station was a hustling and melancholy event. All Mrs. Ingram's acquaintances had of course called to make their adieux. A deputation had come from the Town Council expressing their regret at the circumstance: this was the lingering effect of the elder Wilfred Ingram's popularity in the place. But there was not enough of personal popularity belonging to the present Ingram family to gain them a "send off" at the station, which the better-informed people knew also that Mrs. Ingram would very much dislike. Janet and Beatrice said their sad good-byes in private, and agreed not to see the last of each other in such a public place as was Hartlebury station. But the station-master and his assistants, moved by the history of the deputation and a paragraph in the *Hartlebury Evening News*, were all attention. James Turner, too, came to look after the luggage. So many helpers made the departure all the more confusing: Wilfred was now often so absent-minded that the real burden of it rested on Janet's shoulders. Amid the bustle she was aware of a face she thought she knew, a short young man very correctly dressed, with a quite visible moustache on his upper lip. He had seemingly just arrived by another train; for, along with other hurrying passengers, he emerged from the subway and from the opposite platform. His eyes turned suddenly on Janet with wonder, surprise, and growing fear, that—all of them—Janet was half-conscious of, though neither her eyes nor thoughts were fixed upon the passer-by. But when she got a dozen yards nearer her carriage, where a porter held open the door, she recollected fully, "Of course! it was Willie Sutherland."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHOSOEVER lives withdrawn into himself in a life which is chiefly solitary grows conscious sooner or later of personalities or a personality, of presences or a presence, greater than his own, which from outside him press upon his self, his *ego*, and overawe or overmaster it. Were it not that theological controversies have quite inverted reason in all matters where the Supernatural is concerned, we should long ago have accepted this as a fundamental fact, all theories notwithstanding. Or if I go too far in saying that the solitary and inward-bent man necessarily has this experience, I will say only that the vast majority of his kind have it; and, if their moral natures have been strongly agitated, are almost sure to have it.

But precisely of what nature is or are this outward presence or presences, those who affect to be sure must be speaking on theory and not on knowledge. For though the most of them will assert that this Being that they know is "the only true God," it is enough to observe that they differ very much in the qualities they attribute to this "only true God." So that the evidence would seem to point to various supernatural Beings. Or again it is enough to notice that however much they may use that phrase "the only God," that the majority—of Western folk, of Christians at any rate—are not really monotheists,

but polytheists, or at least ditheists: while that very phrase "the only true God" is from the strictly monotheistic standpoint a nonsense. In fine, the moment we pass from the basal supernatural fact of a personality or personalities outside our own, and build theories thereon, these theories can be fitted to all tastes. The outer Being or Beings may be the spirits of our ancestors, or they may only be (so far as theory goes, I mean) manifestations of some other, some higher self—the "subliminal self" in the phraseology of Mr. Myers and of the Psychological Researchers. And this "subliminal self" again may be no other than the "Superman" of Nietzsche's invention, concerning whom we have heard so much of late. So that by these interpretations the external quasi-supernatural Being or Beings of experience would not be a god or gods at all. And it is natural enough that as in theological questions we have never fully recognised the fundamental facts of experience, and therefore never attempted to distinguish between the facts and the theories which have been put forward to explain them (for in all other matters such distinction is the beginning of knowledge), it is natural enough, I say, that the theories should be as vague as the air and of kinds to suit all tastes.

Wilfred Ingram was marked out by nature as well as by destiny for this experience. In a certain sense he had always been a man with a religion. Never at any time had he seriously doubted the existence of the Heavenly Powers—thinking in this wise as the vast majority of his brother-officers when he was young—but being sure likewise that the Deity must be on the side of the "gentlemanly interest," and therefore would never think of looking with too severe an eye on little freedoms of conduct

and speech which did not sin against good manners. For it is difficult to get rid of the idea that even the gods have need of suffrages and a constituency (the ancients, 'tis sure, never approached the getting rid of the idea); and with such an alliance between Radicalism and Atheism, where could they hope to gather votes if not among the respectable classes?

Such had been Wilfred's religion of old time. Now it was not so much changed in character, but it was infinitely augmented in force. That which he received from the supernatural influences round about him was not what a St. Francis or a St. Theresa got from the powers encompassing them. Wilfred's teacher, Mrs. Robertson, belonged to that Calvinistic Church which—whether it know it or not—is more akin to Islam than any other Western creed. The fatalism of Islam has its counterpart in the Predestination of Calvinism, for both spring from the same source: an overwhelming sense, an overmastering admiration of Power, Might, before which the human will sinks into insignificance. Wilfred's creed, if critically analysed, would have been found perhaps a step nearer to Islam than Calvinism itself. If he could never fully accept the doctrines of Predestination and Damnation, he had now a sense, even stronger than his teacher's, of the Vanity of Human things, a soldier's duty of absolute obedience to the Powers Divine. What his own lot was to be he did not much consider; he only acknowledged that he had never yet gained the assurance of salvation. But, with such a crime upon his soul, how could he hope for such? So he would say in his thoughts, and think of himself as the Slave of God. In the deep inward of his mind he had never fully repented the murder of Robertson. The remorse he felt was for the sake of Robertson's

mother. And in a kind of way he would now and again think that what he had done he had done only as the instrument of Heaven.

Wilfred's conversion, whatever its precise nature, was sincere enough to make him break with all his former life. There were indeed no very close ties between him and his fellow-citizens. But the tie of ridicule is always a strong one between man and man. And if Wilfred grew indifferent to that, it was because he was sustained by a Power not his own. He submitted to all the dictates of that Power. And to find them out he had become a sort of necromancer, a dealer in signs and auguries. He had perhaps never heard of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*. But he used the same *sortes* with his Bible. The slightest accident might have an interest for him. On the other hand, he took less and less interest in what has claims on most men, business, and the ordering of his own life or that of others in the sense of comfort and convenience. He was now living quite alone in Hartlebury itself. The year was well advanced, the days were short and the nights long.

A letter in a strange hand, such as he found one morning on his breakfast-table, might have an unknown significance, and before breaking the envelope Wilfred sent up a half-prayer, half-incantation for guidance. Should he open it at all? A word from a street-crier gave the omen. Then, when Wilfred had read the first few lines of the note, he turned pale and saw how just had been the intimation sent by the Supreme Ones. For the letter came from Margaret Vaughan. Yes, of course it was the writing in those verses; but they had looked so like print, their character made no impression on him. This writing was small and extraordinarily neat, very far

from spontaneous, and suggested a character which had a good deal of empire over itself. This was true of Margaret, despite (if one need say despite) her tendency in former days to drift.

“Mr. Ingram” (the letter began in this unusual fashion), “Ever since I left Hartlebury I have wished to speak to you, but I did not know how. I hear that you are living alone and not at The Mount.” (The letter was addressed “Wilfred Ingram, Esq., Hartlebury,” Wilfred now noted.) “I do not know whether it would be possible for you to come and see me at this address. I do not know any other plan. What I have to say is very, very important. I could not say it in any public place. Yours truly,

“M. VAUGHAN.”

A most strange letter! But the beating of Wilfred's heart made him know that he would act upon it—and without consulting an oracle. So long as nothing happened to convince him he was meant *not* to go, he would go.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LONDON was a monochrome of ochre or pale sienna-brown, for it was wrapped in a light fog, a November one, as Wilfred's cab drove him through regions all unknown to a place at the back of King's Road, Chelsea. A desert land: not deserted indeed by all human beings, but by all things that Wilfred had been wont to consider the signs of respectability. Some tumble-down cottages, that not long since had been genuine village cottages, faced a blank wall. And in the space between, which was a blind alley, lay, here a pile of ladders with some mortar boards and other building utensils, there a cabman was washing down a cab. On the balconies of the cottages—for most had little, green-painted wooden balconies on their one upper storey—hung out aprons and petticoats to dry. The cab had deposited Wilfred duly before the door inscribed "Rembrandt Studios." When it had driven off, the visitor stood in doubt, for the door had neither bell nor knocker, and the blank wall seemed impenetrable and impossible as representing an address. From his position Wilfred could not see that a roof pierced with skylights crowned the wall. At last he knocked with his stick. The door was opened almost immediately by Margaret herself.

"Do you live here all alone?" Wilfred asked, taking her hand almost mechanically.

"Oh no," said the other. "Several of us have studios here. . . . Only I expected you," she added, to explain why she had been so ready to answer the door. Then she led the way up a bare and not overclean stairway to her room, her studio. For a studio it was small; for a sitting-room it was very high. And Wilfred, who knew nothing of artists and their ways, had a comforting sense of space: the lack of space is the most depressing of all signs of indigence. But then the neighbourhood!

Margaret had prepared tea. It was the same set in which he had twice received her hospitality at Hartlebury. Only on those two occasions of say an hour each in his lifetime: and yet airs as from long-past days were wafted back to him, from ancient days some eighteen months ago. For a little while Wilfred was quite taken up with these associations, and in them he forgot that there was any special occasion for his coming. They talked as of old. And Margaret, by a habit which with artists is almost mechanical, showed her guest the sketch in oils of a friend which stood on one of the easels and some illustrations (still of the *ombres chinoises* type which she had made her speciality) that had been ordered by a music-publisher.

If any outsider had noted the interviews between the two in "old days" and now, he would have observed but this difference, that formerly Miss Vaughan very seldom looked her guest in the face: now she did so steadily. Indeed, only when occasion obliged it did she take her eyes off Wilfred.

"And, O my God, how he is changed!" she thought, with a great inflow of pity. That helped to take away the awe of Wilfred which she had always had, and would not now quite leave her. She talked more freely than of

old, and explained incidentally that she was not dependent for her living on what she earned by her art. She had not been that at Hartlebury.

"Then why did you come?" Wilfred asked, speaking out of his heart, yet half-forgetting all that had been and gone.

"Why, you know," said Maggie, looking at him with her steady eyes. She did not even blush. This answer came upon him like a thunderclap. His breath stopped short. Then over his yellow-pale face rushed a wave of colour. He stared at his companion speechless for a moment.

"You mean that . . ." he began, breathing hard.

"I knew him before I came to Hartlebury. Oh yes," Margaret answered, this time colouring from sympathy.

"What a brute!"

He spoke to himself only half-aloud. All his old rage coming back.

"Well, he's dead now."

Margaret did not like this injustice to the dead man, though she had never really loved him, and had loved (Oh, now she felt sure) this present one. Such rancour after the deed was done seemed terrible, like mutilating a corpse.

Once more a change came over Wilfred. All the blood ebbed from his face; he became once again pale and haggard, more than on his entry. And once again the girl's pity arose and her love with it.

"I don't want you," she began hesitatingly, "to think of it." And then she paused again. And Wilfred had time to realise how strange a speech this was to him. "And yet," the girl went on, "I—I asked you to come here to speak of . . . it. . . ."

"Of what?" It came out almost in a whisper that seemed to steal along the bare walls of the room so full of shadows.

The subjection of the other gave Margaret courage.

"Oh," she said, stretching out her two hands toward Wilfred in an attitude which was infinitely graceful, infinitely tender, "Oh, don't think I blame you. You did it for *me*. I know."

The last word came back as an echo, but with a different sense.

"You know?" The same whisper stole round the walls.

"Oh yes. . . . I know. . . . I knew it must be you . . . and . . . that you had done it for me."

A change swept over Wilfred. The sight of that figure—Margaret herself had grown thinner than of old, not quite so robust an angel, a more reflecting one than of old times—so like a messenger from on high, subdued his doubts, his reserve, his egoism. At last! he thought, at last I can confess to someone.

"Yes, it's true," he said, and (nerving himself to utter the word), "I killed him."

He shivered; then, as he covered his face with his hands, his self-control left him and he sobbed aloud. It seemed awful from such a man.

"Oh, oh," moaned Margaret in sympathy. She got up from her seat and threw herself on her knees beside Wilfred's chair, as a mother might throw herself on her knees beside a badly hurt child. She put one hand on his shoulder. "Don't, don't," she said.

But still Wilfred did not speak. At length he raised himself and looked around. At first he hardly recognised where he was. A century seemed to have passed by in

those few minutes. There came an awkward pause. Maggie was in her seat again looking at him with the same steady eyes. Her hands were in front of her, clasped tight. And the emotion she had felt gave an expression of divine pity to her face. Surely he had received a message of pardon from the Courts above.

For a little while this impression abode with Wilfred Ingram. Then, deprived for a moment of all power of thought, he said very simply—

“What am I to do?”

“I will do what you wish,” was all her answer, as simple and direct.

. . . The sentence had a very real meaning for Margaret; but to Wilfred it was obscure. The effect of neighbourhood to so much beauty and graciousness (it was the first time in his experience that Margaret had displayed the latter quality: for it was the first time her feelings had got the better of her reserve) could not be without their effect. His mind was all confused. Everything was the opposite of what he had imagined. He remembered how he had in thought given up Margaret as a creature stained. And here she was free seemingly from a consciousness of guilt, bringing balm to his own wounded conscience. Yet (and this he half realised too) the balm was not of the usual kind. It consisted rather in the ignoring there was any great crime to wash out. Nevertheless Wilfred took the natural way, the way of confession.

“It was awful,” he said, “when nobody knew! And I saw it all the time . . . lying in my room . . .”

Margaret shivered. The man Robertson had never been much to her; and since she had got to know this other he had grown almost hateful. But 'twas too much to think of him lying dead. Yet for the sake of the one

before her she put an iron grip upon herself and still listened. While Wilfred all in his remembrances, spoke as one mesmerised might confess—not thinking to whom. He spoke *à bâtons rompus* without order in his thoughts.

"And then before he died he cried out, 'Oh, my poor mother!' . . . That was the worst of all." He looked at her with haggard eyes. "Oh, my God, if he only hadn't said *that*. Oh, my God, my God!" Once more he sobbed aloud, covering his eyes.

Margaret's face, which had insensibly hardened toward Wilfred, grew compassionate once more. She put a force upon herself, summoning up all the theories on which she had been nourished at Munich—theories of the antiquity of our code of morals and the superiority to them of the superior man. She was not sure that she could not have killed Robertson if he had tyrannised her much longer; and she was sure at any rate that the man before her had wrought his "supposed crime" for her sake.

"But I was set free," she said.

Wilfred started. The notion of striking a balance over such a crime came as a shock. Instinct still told him that he and this angelic minister were far apart.

Yet more and more he felt the grip of loneliness when he should have left her. . . . Unless indeed he could come again soon. . . . On this note the interview ended. Margaret saw that Wilfred was in no condition yet to come to a decision. He was still much more overthrown in all his moral nature than she had expected. On her own side she had thought things out, and her decision was made.

CHAPTER XXX.

HE came again and again. For Wilfred now was in effect master of his own time. The assistant manager who was to replace him was more competent than he in all the affairs of the brewery. Wilfred came again and again: at first driven by the mere necessity to confess and talk over all he had undergone; and he went away with ever fresh terror at being alone.

The obvious solution presented itself to his mind, but not unreservedly to his heart. Somehow he began to feel as if Margaret had been an accomplice in his crime. A sort of vague distrust of her arose, along with the necessity of her society. Another thought, which lay deep in his mind unexamined, was rather the opposite of this: that she was never conscious of that vast irremediable wrong from man to woman which now and again he still thought had been righteously avenged. If that vast wrong had not existed? Ah! What then?

These thoughts lay only far back in Wilfred's mind. Had he not found a friend to whom for the first time in his life he could speak of his feelings on that subject. To talk of his feelings on any matter was almost a new experience with Wilfred Ingram. The ice had been a little broken with Mrs. Robertson; but that which lay in reserve between them had often frozen up his lips in intercourse with her.

When he began to speak of religion and of how that

alone had kept him from suicide, Margaret gave a start of surprise. But she did not interrupt him nor imply any negation. The hand of God had certainly been shown, Wilfred said, in his escaping the public shame of an execution. And for that he had prayed, not on his own account, but for the sake of his family. For him nothing remained in life but to bring others to a sense of sin. He was beginning to feel dissatisfied with the ministrations of the English Church toward such an end: though he had always before held to his churchmanship with both hands. Mrs. Robertson had shaken all these ideas in him. . . .

Maggie listened sympathetically to all these things: yet with an inward dread. She loved Wilfred: she had no doubt about that now. But the experiences of life had made a change in her. She was beginning to look forward and to see the ends of her acts; though still the instinctive ruled in her. She loved Wilfred now with the additional love which a mother has for her child. She looked up to him as a *preux* still, the while she understood that in another sense he was almost a child (as has been said) moving about in a world not realised. How completely this man had blotted out the other: made Robertson seem hateful in her eyes. And the qualities in the other which had once attracted her, his masterfulness, the sense of physical force, repelled her now in the retrospect. Wilfred's chivalry of thought attracted her from afar: a feeling she admired but could never wholly understand. As such, as a *preux*, she loved him. But she desired him likewise. Almost from her childhood—through the carelessness of her father—Margaret had had many undesirable companions. And of course among her set at Munich the *amour de jeune fille*, or what

they used to call *Musselinliebe*, was a thing to be despised. That a man should be so backward! This talk of religion, of the worthlessness of life on earth, in what would it end?

"You are my only friend," Wilfred said, after one of his moments of expansion; "I cannot speak to anyone in the world as I can to you."

"Poor Wilfred!" (Insensibly the "balance of power" was passing from the man to the woman. She could speak in this way now.)

He looked up and met her eyes moist with tears. An angelic vision!

"Oh, if you would marry me. Will you, in spite . . ."

Margaret had expected this and thought over it in advance. And those meditations gave a certain hesitancy to her reply—

"No. You would only do it out of pity. . . ."

"O Wilfred," she cried, "I love you. You did it for me. You have suffered everything for me . . . I belong to you." And taking the initiative, as seemed to her quite natural now, she put her arms round his bowed head and kissed him on the cheek.

He took her in his arms. "Then you will marry me?" She nodded—her head now was bowed—and said nothing. "Oh, but say nothing about it to anyone yet!" she said at last.

Then she raised her head and kissed him on the lips.

"I love you," she said again, and kissed him again. A little fire seemed to come back to her from him.

On that note they parted for the day. This time Wilfred had once again put up at his club. He came again the next day. A thought had struck him.

"We are always alone," he said.

"Of course. I don't want anyone to come when you are here. . . ."

"Do you tell them not to?"

"Yes."

Wilfred was silent. They sat as lovers can sit in silence. But were they lovers? Neither in the secret of their souls was sure.

Another thought struck Wilfred.

"You sent for me at first?" he said.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Why, to tell you," she said.

Wilfred started in his place and shuddered. "That you knew?" It was more than reproach, it was almost repulsion.

"Oh, you don't understand!" Margaret used the same words she had used to Beatrice, and almost with the same cry. "I say I belong to you."

"You will soon," and he kissed her. The kiss was far from a passionate one, though.

Her feelings were not that day under control. She had been a patient listener too long. She felt as if he were drifting away from her, and threw her arms about him to hold him still.

"O Wilfred, why do you want to marry me? We shall not be happy."

"You don't want to marry me?"

"I want to love you. I do love you. You will despise me if I am your wife because—because . . ."

"How can I despise anyone?" But it was spoken more in a Puritan than a human tone. And Margaret felt that he was drifting, drifting away—that they were drifting apart. The tone of the last sentence revolted her.

"You would despise and you would hate me in the end . . . for knowing," she said, with a new passion in her voice. She who had hitherto been so receptive, so helpful. "And we should both feel miserable hypocrites before the world. Though we've neither done great harm." It was spoken defiantly.

He shuddered once again, and that eternal cry, "Oh, my poor mother!" came into his ears from the void.

"No, not you. You did least wrong, because you did not act for yourself. You are too good, Wilfred; but you fancy things. . . . We cannot marry. But we can love one another. I love you now. And I belong to you. . . ."

She held him in her arms and kissed him on the mouth. But through Wilfred only a shiver ran. He burst into a cold sweat. Now he understood her meaning. It was too great a shock to all the principles of his life. Yet he knew that his heart was beating violently. Never had such a temptation come his way.

A moment's hesitation was enough. She let him loose, and bowing her face upon her hands burst into wild weeping.

Wilfred looked at the beautiful face and figure—that type of angelic innocence—and his mind was all confused. Some picture or some narrative of the Temptation of St. Anthony crossed his thoughts, and stories of angel visitors who when sprinkled with holy water turned into fiends. It was not clear thought. But slowly there dawned upon his mind what it would mean for him if this girl were not what he thought her, an innocent nature shamefully misled and mishandled. Had she induced him to the crime? He began to think that she had. All that he had undergone in these ten months had left Wil-

fred less capable of clear thought than of old. He had never been clever: conventions, accepted notions had stood for him in the place of clear ideas. Now that he had broken with some of these and broken so much with the past, his mind had no moorings: he was often like one sailing in deep waters in a mist. One idea alone persisted—What would it mean for him if once more, and in this matter of the awfullest consequence, he had been mistaken in the circumstances he had dealt with; if for the sake of a girl who was not all injured innocence he had inflicted the eternal wrong upon that *other* friend, that “mother” in Panton Manor? Margaret Vaughan passed out of his thought. Once again the scene in the library grew vivid as if it happened yesterday: then the funeral and Mrs. Robertson’s face beside the open grave; and the piercing sadness of her “I shall be very much alone.”

Had he done all this for the sake of a girl who was *not* innocent at heart?

Almost unconscious of what he was doing, Wilfred took up his hat and wandered forth into the open, to the vague land that lay before the studio door, and thence into squalid streets he did not know, squalid and narrow and sticky with mud. He wandered, now jostled by foot-passengers, now sworn at by cabmen or omnibus-drivers. The whole world looked like a procession of shadows on that black November evening. And once again, as his senses revived, Wilfred’s favourite text came into his mind—“Man walketh in a vain shadow”—came back with the comfort that it always brought.

“You ought not to go out on an evening like this without an overcoat, Mr. Ingram,” said the head porter at the club, a white-haired man who had known Wilfred

long, and often took a paternal tone toward "his gentlemen." Wilfred's wretched looks had already inspired him with pity. For with anyone in the position of a servant Wilfred was always popular.

(For Wilfred had left his coat at the studio, not remembering.)

Who had once said the same thing to him—that he ought not to have come out without his great-coat? Ah! he remembered.

He made his way up to his room and sat there in the dark, the visions of the streets he had just left seeming to move before him in a procession: clear thought he had none. But anon those shadows took on an association—shadows in a portfolio—there somewhere—over there.

As for Margaret, she sat on in her place, having made no movement when Wilfred rose to go. She still sat on; and the coke ceased to burn in her stove and crumbled to grey ashes.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AMONG the large houses of the "manor-house" order which lay within the smoke of Hartlebury, one has not yet been mentioned in this narrative, for the reason that it belonged not to the group of white houses which, with The Mount, all lay on the same side of the town, and each of which was within view of most of its companions. This remote house was called Eldon House, and stood upon the Eldon Road, but quite near to the town, and a good mile from the nearest village, the hamlet of Stonefield. Therefore it is probable that its present title was a new one. Tradition said that it had once been a posting inn, the "Royal George." That was in the days of the Georges, when perhaps Hartlebury had not grown even into the good-sized country town which it became under the Corn Laws. The inn must have stood some forty feet off from the main road, and had probably then a green in front of it: for the stone-built Eldon House stood thus far back. Now a high wall, advancing to the road, enclosed it and its considerable grounds, so that from the road it was only seen through its iron gates. One wall of the garden abutted on the Hartlebury Park. Its owner was a Mr. Worthrop, whose father, a tradesman of Manchester, had bought the house and some neighbouring land at a bargain, and retired thither from business rather early in life. The present Worthrop, Matthew

Worthrop, was the only surviving son of his father. He had never been obliged to earn his living. Theoretically he was an engineer—his father having brought him up to that profession. But what his father left, along with the ground-rents from his strip of land, now part of Hartlebury, gave him a much larger income than he spent: for he was a bachelor. He was a strong Liberal, and one of the most influential in the place: President of the Liberal Association, of the Liberal Club, Alderman of the County Council, &c., and a supporter of many local charities. Though he could not therefore be reckoned a miser, Matthew Worthrop took delight in the fact that his income very largely exceeded his expenditure, more so (naturally) each year: for the expenditure was unchanged. He drove about in a respectable one-horse brougham; never rode, nor shot, and was waited on by two old women, a housekeeper and a cook. There was another maid in the background somewhere, bullied by these two, and scarcely allowed so much as the sight of her master. It would have been impossible to grow much in the smoke-dried garden; but there was a good deal of glass which employed the attention of a man and a boy. Mr. Worthrop was proud of his hot-house flowers and of his grapes.

His education was small—a professional education merely. But he had travelled somewhat—much more than most of the Hartlebury folk—and acquired a certain amount of taste by visiting foreign museums and galleries. He was one of those who greatly admired Rudolf Ingram's portrait of the late Mayor. He had once met Rudolf, moreover, at Panton Manor, while the latter was painting Robertson, and been delighted to find that, though he was called Ingram, he was a Radical. In the

year 1906 Mr. Worthrop decided to invite Rudolf to Eldon House to paint his own portrait. The portrait was to celebrate the victory of the Liberal Party at the last general election. But as the Liberal Club was too poor to make a present of his likeness to the President, or thought at any rate 'twas a pity to carry coals to Newcastle, it had been arranged that it should be the other way: the President should give his portrait to the club. It was a kind of extravagance to which Matthew Worthrop felt no objection, as indeed few men do to extravagances which feed their vanity.

Thus it was that seven years after his first visit to his cousins at The Mount, Rudolf found himself once more in Staffordshire, in a house whose rooms were on very much the same scale as that other house's. There were rather more of them than at The Mount: for the area covered by Eldon House was the greater. It was, too, the more solidly built; of grey stone instead of brick and stucco, a stone turned almost black by the near smoke of Hartlebury. Within, everything was of an extreme comfort along with a certain bachelor negligence. The large drawing-room, standing for most part of the year unused, showed the barbarous taste of the mid-Victorian age; its grand piano was "touched" when, once a year, one of Matthew Worthrop's nieces paid him a visit. The playing was hardly designed to give pleasure to the performer or anyone else; but it showed her a person of education. About both the dining-room and library hung a heavy scent of old tobacco commingled with russia leather, with which the chairs and many books were covered, and a certain stuffiness suggesting windows not opened often enough, carpets not often enough shaken out. The carpets themselves, however, were of the best though not the

newest Turkey. The library was lined with volumes from floor to ceiling, owning a high percentage of bound magazines and reviews. In the dining-room Rudolf had finished an excellent dinner and was now sharing a bottle of '84 port with his host.

"Now, I suppose," Mrs. Barraclough, the housekeeper or female butler, had said, "you two gentlemen will want to talk and drink here a bit, before you go into the library." (She put the accent on the middle syllable.) Mrs. Barraclough was wont to address her master after this fashion; and that gave scandal to some.

"That'll do, Mrs. Barraclough. . . . And I hope you've made Mr. Ingram comfortable in his room."

"Oh, I've made him comfortable. It's the blue room—Mr. Jim's room—I've put him into."

She did not ask Rudolf to confirm her statement, but left the room upon this.

"He was my sister's son," the host said, explaining Jim; "but he's married now and living in Hamburg. He married a German there. His three sisters too, they're all married. They come and pay me a visit sometimes with their husbands or their children. But of course not as they used to when they were young girls. I'm getting on, you know. I enter my seventieth year next October; and my sisters were older than I. But they married rather late. One died in childbed the year after she was married; and the other she's these four children, one son and three girls, all married and with children themselves. Of course, as the bachelor uncle they wouldn't be likely to neglect me, would they?"

Rudolf made a suitable reply, studying his sitter the while. Evidently, he reflected, the old man lived more alone than he used to do, and perhaps, too, had grown

more garrulous with age. Well, *desto besser*, garrulous people were the best sitters as a rule.

"Poor Robertson's the last man you painted . . .?"

"Not quite that," said Rudolf.

"I'm speaking in this neighbourhood," the other said a trifle testily. "He met with a terrible fate. Of course you heard all about that?"

"I read it in the papers."

"Terrible fate. It seems strange, too. He was a bit close about his affairs. They couldn't tell exactly, but I should doubt his being the man to carry much cash about in his pocket. And even if he had, who could have known it? It seems strange a man could be murdered like that walking on a road like the Hanbury Road."

"I don't know it," Rudolf said.

"It's not such a lonely road by any manner of means. Though I daresay on a winter's night—it was the fifteenth of January, the day he was assassinated—no, I'm wrong, that was the day the body was discovered. You don't know the Hanbury Road, you say? Well, how should you?"

"No, I don't."

"Where the body was found was a deserted field—as you may call it—called Brightman's Ground."

"In an old pit, the newspaper said, I think I remember."

"In a boring they had abandoned. There's two or three on Brightman's Ground. So there can be no doubt the poor fellow was murdered on the Hartlebury Road. But what made him walk out there that night nobody can guess. . . . You know it is said," and Mr. Worthrop's eyes grew brighter as he spoke, "that in the point of

morals he wasn't everything which you'd expect from a Scottish Presbyterian."

"Oh, the Scotch!" Rudolf began. And he gave some of his own experiences of men of that nationality.

"You don't say so!" said Mr. Worthrop, delighted.

For a little while the conversation ran on on that fascinating subject, Rudolf bearing the lion's share. But he himself was more interested in the murder, and he let the talk drift back to that.

"I didn't know much of your cousin," Mr. Worthrop said, seemingly *à propos de rien*. The sudden transition startled Rudolf.

"He wasn't like you—he's not like you I suppose still. I mean he was a regular Tory."

"To tell you the truth I don't know where he lives now," Rudolf said.

"Close by, but I . . . Oh yes, it's at Bartley End. It's in Hartlebury—the electoral district, that is to say. But I daresay it'll be three miles from here. Didn't you know he was living in Hartlebury still?"

"No, I didn't."

"Dear me! Then if I hadn't chanced to mention his name you'd have gone away without thinking of seeing him. But I suppose you'll go now?"

"Yes . . ." Rudolf spoke with a shade of hesitation. "I shall go if I can find the time—certainly."

"Oh, you'll not be in such a hurry to go, I hope, Mr. Ingram, now you're here. And you won't want me to be a-sitting at you all day long, I hope."

"No, of course not, not all day. But . . ." Here Rudolf tried as far as possible to arrange the hours for his work.

When that had been thrashed out, Mr. Worthrop returned to Wilfred Ingram.

"Yes," he said, "I didn't know much of your cousin. I knew more of his father. We were opposed in politics, but I had a great respect for him, a very great respect. . . ." He paused, and continued not in such a hearty voice: "And I've a great respect for your cousin too, from what I hear about him."

"Have you? What for?"

The spontaneity of the question was certainly not flattering to Wilfred the son.

"They say he does a great deal of good. He's a sort of preacher."

"Sort of preacher!"

"Yes. I think he's built a sort of mission-room, or something of the kind, in which he preaches to the workmen at Bartley End."

"Well, I'm damned!" Rudolf exclaimed.

Mr. Worthrop drew himself together not wholly pleased.

"I am not a very religious man myself, I'm sorry to say," he said; "but I've a great respect for those who are—especially if they can keep men from drinking."

"How," said Rudolf suddenly, "did we come to mention my cousin?"

"Why, I don't know. . . . It's natural we should," his host answered. "What were we talking of before?"

"Why, Robert. . . ."

"Of course we were. And that's another good thing about your cousin. He used to go and visit the poor old lady at Panton Manor a great deal, they say. And yet I don't know whether he was very friendly with her poor son."

"Robertson? Oh no."

But when he had said that Rudolf stopped short, seemed to stop short as a listener even. Mr. Worthrop had begun to speak further of Wilfred's kindness to Mrs. Robertson, when his guest asked him an irrelevant question about a piece of furniture, and got up to examine it.

When he had answered the question, Mr. Worthrop thought it was time they should go into the library. Rudolf was offered no coffee; but at nine Mrs. Barracrough brought in tea.

"Well, you've sat there a time," she said admonishingly, "nigh upon three hours." For Mr. Worthrop's dinner-hour, unchanged for thirty years, was six by the clock.

"Well, well," said the host, "I don't get anyone to talk to every day, do I?"

Mrs. Barracrough sniffed. As a fact her master talked to her the other days.

"You'll tire the gentleman out!" she said.

"Oh, by no means," protested Rudolf.

Mrs. Barracrough now stayed in the room, while pouring out the tea for the gentlemen, and she sat down to do it. It was the only occasion on which she sat down in her master's presence. All passed according to long-established custom.

As if to show that she too could make conversation, the housekeeper now took up the burden of the talk. She was some ten years younger than her master, and that meant that Mrs. Barracrough was nigh sixty. She took pride in the fact that she was Hartlebury born and Hartlebury bred, whereas both her master and the Ingram family might be reckoned interlopers. Thus the housekeeper always claimed to know more about the people of the neighbourhood than Mr. Worthrop did. Yet despite

her claims Mrs. Barraclough could not realise that there was any other Ingram family than those once of The Mount: in showing Rudolf his room she had already embarrassed him with questions concerning his aunt and cousin that he could not answer. Now a chance remark of Rudolf's host on the growth of Hartlebury set Mrs. Barraclough going again on her favourite topic.

"Ah," she said, "when I was a little girl it was all fields where North Bank is, and that was before Mr. Nathaniel Worthrop bought this house. They say it was an inn, but that I don't remember, nor yet hearing my father speak of it. But there was a gravel-pit on North Bank, that I do remember, because we played in it as children coming from school."

"Oh, you don't remember more about Hartlebury than I do, Mrs. Barraclough," said Mr. Worthrop. "Why, it's all nonsense. I wasn't twenty when my father bought this house. So that'll be fifty years ago."

Mrs. Barraclough passing by the interruption went on with the history of Hartlebury.

"And your grandfather, sir," she said to Rudolf, "my father worked for him."

"My grandfather?" the guest cried in astonishment. His attention had wandered, for he was much taken up with his own thoughts.

"Now Mrs. Barraclough, you're talking nonsense," said Mr. Worthrop; "Mr. Rudolf Ingram doesn't belong to The Mount. He's Captain Ingram's cousin, that's all."

"Well," replied the other, "let them be cousins; they'd have the same grandfather, wouldn't they?"

She ignored the opinions of the guest as she had done before in the question of his room. Rudolf, however, was awake now,

"But who was my grandfather?" he asked.

"Why, Mr. Nettlethorpe. The 'Artlebury Brewery, it used to be Nettlethorpe's. *You* must remember that," Mrs. Barraclough said to her master in a condescending tone.

"Of course I remember that," answered the old man testily. "But I don't think he was Mr. Ingram's grandfather, or anything of the sort."

"He was some relation, I believe," said Rudolf. "But I'm hanged if I know what."

"He was your grandfather, sir," Mrs. Barraclough said in decided tones. "And my father worked under him when he was a boy; and often I've heard him tell of old Mr. Tom Nettlethorpe, as all called him in those days."

"You're wrong, Mrs. Barraclough," the host said. "And now I come to think of it I've heard Mr. Ingram say he was his great-uncle."

"Then he'd be like enough great-grandfather to this gentleman, which is what I've always heard."

"Nonsense. You'd never heard of Mr. Rudolf Ingram till I told you he was coming here."

"Well," said Mrs. Barraclough, "if you won't have any more tea I think you should be going to bed, Mr. Worthrop. You've been sitting in there too long over your wine, and that's what it is." In which fashion the housekeeper, as it were, turned the flank of the discussion.

Rudolf was glad to get to his room and to be alone with his own thoughts.

"By Jove, how extraordinary!" he exclaimed, sitting down in a chair. He spoke with no overwhelming sense of horror. For Rudolf, like Margaret Vaughan, had kept company with the non-moral man. Nor had Rudolf's

feelings prevented him from choosing a comfortable chair for his meditations. "It is as clear as mud in a wine-glass. I wonder if *he* or anyone else knows now or suspects." (*He* was his host.) "The way he brought the name in! . . . His going to visit the old mother. . . . I remember her—always on the Bible. . . . And turning preacher! By Jove, it's simply *giving* himself away. . . . He *doesn't* guess," Rudolf exclaimed suddenly. "It was quite genuine what he said about respecting Wilfred. Perhaps the others don't. . . . He hated Robertson—simply *hated* him—and—of course there was Minnie. . . . By God and *she* knows. . . . *That* explains it. Well, I . . . I begin to think I'm a fool myself. . . . I am a damned fool," he went on as more and more clearly his last dinner at The Mount came back to memory.

Rudolf was not sensitive in mind, save where matters of colour and form were in question, nor, except in some degree for the purposes of his art, imaginative. But for once his surroundings, the conversations he had been listening to, made an extraordinary impression on him. The commonplaceness of all *this*, the wonder and horror of *that*—the contrast was incredible. Every detail of the evening he had passed seemed to combine to make up one picture: the extreme thick-carpeted comfort; the slight tobaccoish odour over all; the solidity of this stone house. He thought too of that family—Mrs. Barraclough's—which had worked for—yes, it was his great-great-uncle: he remembered the family pedigree now. And he contrasted the solidity of the past with his own unrooted life—contrasted it with a bitter pang. For seven years ago he had had a kind of domesticity—a false domesticity; now that was all broken up, and he was quite alone.

And then he thought again of his last dinner at The

Mount. It seemed weird and terrible in the retrospect, as if murder had been already in the air. He had not foreseen then that The Mount would be abandoned for ever, and that he would never go back to a house which had certain pleasant childhood memories for him. A softening came into his heart and even into his eyes. No one in truth could come across the elder Wilfred Ingram without liking him, not even Rudolf, who had at any rate this title to be reckoned an *Übermensch* that he had—like Pallas Athene of the Homeric hymn—"an untender heart." God! what a ruin! what an overthrow! As Wilfred had often done, Rudolf in thinking of The Mount seemed to hear again his uncle's cheerful voice asking him how he had amused himself, how he had spent the day.

"Shall I go and see the beggar?" Rudolf said to himself, as he was painting his subject next day. "What will they say at home if they find out I've been down to Hartlebury and not seen him? . . . Well, they must say what they like. . . . I'll leave the chap in peace."

Some months before this Wilfred in his new incarnation had been discussed by two other of the Hartlebury people—or should one say ex-Hartlebury people?—Ralph Beck and William Sutherland. The former was no longer senior curate at St. Bartholomew's, but Vicar of Stapple Gate, one of the mining villages near by, a living in the gift of the Rector of Hartlebury: and Willie Sutherland was now a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He had been one of the most brilliant of Senior Wranglers. He was, moreover, engaged to a graduate of Girton, equal to first in Class II. Part II. This fact he had announced to his former monitor. Sutherland the Fellow had lost none of his essential simplicity of nature; and it was

without any shamefacedness that he let the conversation turn in the direction of the Ingram family. Even now Janet was so much in his thoughts that Wilfred had almost slipped out of them. Mr. Beck told (tightening his lips a little as he did so) how the mother and daughter were still living down in Sussex; that Miss Ingram had been once again in Hartlebury three years ago staying with Professor and Mrs. Armitage; but that they too had left, and there was small probability of her being seen in those parts again! (And his thought added, "And she is still unmarried, probably she will never get married down there, but live with that pretentious old mother till all trace of youth has left her. And I would . . .") Then after a moment's hesitation he spoke also of Wilfred Ingram, of how he had (seemingly) left the church altogether, as he preached to working men on Sundays in an iron building, which stood almost opposite to Bartley End Church. Mrs. Robertson, it seemed, had helped in the building thereof. Wilfred Ingram, Beck always knew, had been the one insurmountable obstacle to the fulfilment of his hopes. Kind folks had asked him to meet Miss Ingram often enough. He had paid quasi-parochial calls on the mother. But he was never "received" at The Mount; and he knew Wilfred had been the *causa causans* of this defeat. So it was that, though he began by a tolerant tone, he could not, believing what he believed, end on it.

"People must, of course," he said, "save their souls in their own way, and" (but here his voice changed) "repent after their own fashion. If the repentance is sincere. And it needs to be . . ." he added grimly, rather as thinking aloud, "with him."

Willie Sutherland started. He had, it has been said,

been thinking so much of the sister that the brother and all his tragedy had sunk to the back of his mind like a legend. These last words and the tone in which they were spoken awoke him to sudden consciousness.

"You know?" he gasped. In a moment all the terror of that night swept down upon his memory.

"Do *you*?" Mr. Beck was even more startled. He jumped up from his chair. "How?"

"I have never told a soul," Willie said hesitating. He was a man now, who must think and act for himself.

"Well, I do not want you to tell me if you do not wish to."

Mr. Beck put on his priesthood. He instinctively felt that his influence over the other had lessened, and now he regretted the latitudinarianism of something he had just said. There were these rapid changes of standpoint with him.

"I should not mind. . . ." Willie began, feeling too the change in his friend, and a little overawed.

"A priest is not good for much if he cannot guard a secret inviolably," said Mr. Beck, implying that he should consider this one as on a level with a secret of the confessional.

Whereupon Willie Sutherland set to work and told his friend and pastor the full history of that most terrible of all nights. And when he began to speak, every detail came back to his mind.

"How terrible! How extraordinary!" Mr. Beck said, listening with his hands clasped round his head. "The wretched man! Was that all to avenge his devilish pride? . . . How can I ever? . . . Ah! I should not have asked you to tell me. Were you right, I wonder? . . ."

"Oh, his . . . *family*!" Willie cried.

"Yes, yes. The innocent suffer too much for the guilty."

"But you said *you* knew."

"My suspicions were very strong—almost amounting to knowledge," the clergyman said, glossing a little. "But to know all those details." And he sank his head in his hands again.

"You don't mean that you ever meet him?" asked Willie Sutherland.

"Oh no! There's no chance of my seeing him—nor any of them again," he said, with a drop in his voice.

"She'll never know now," said Willie to himself, with a triumphal sadness.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was still in Chelsea, but in a new-built set of flats and in a room with about a quarter of the cubic contents of the "Rembrandt" studio, that Rudolf found the sometime occupant of that room. Margaret looked happy. She was in fact engaged. Five years and more do much to heal all wounds, and alter all a person's outlook upon life. Margaret was alone, still essentially placid and self-contained.

"Rudolf!" she cried; "I haven't seen you for years."

"No," he answered, still more unmoved as he took a seat, "not since I went to St. John's Wood. But you didn't tell me what you'd have?"

"A picture, of course. But it's too early yet."

"Patterson his name is, isn't it? Is he any good?" Rudolf asked.

"Of course he is! Why, he had a very good press with his 'Imogen' last year."

"Imogen! O lord!"

"Oh, that's the French pose," Minnie answered unruffled. "I don't say I wouldn't rather he had not got to do black and white. . . . But there. . . ."

"You've got on to that *Chat Noir* dodge rather well."

"*Chat Noir* dodge—the *ombres chinoises*, you mean!"

"Yes. It came from the *Chat Noir* first. They performed them first—Salonge was telling me all about it—and then they published those books."

"Oh, I see. I remember the books, of course. It was Mary Mazinesko gave me the *Marche à l'Etoile*—and . . ." she stopped short suddenly.

"What?"

"O—only. . . It was being at Hartlebury suggested to me doing that sort of thing."

"Oh, well, I was at Hartlebury last week."

Rudolf had come to speak upon this subject. His bluntness was partly in his nature, partly a matter of calculation.

"You were?" Her face changed utterly. "There was no . . .? You weren't . . .?" she began.

"No special reason. Nobody dead. Oh no. I went to paint a portrait. That's all."

Margaret gave a vast sigh of relief.

"But didn't you . . .? They've left, I know, except . . . Wilfred." She brought out the name with a certain defiant firmness.

Rudolf affected not to notice.

"Yes, The Mount—their house, you know—has been sold a long time since. And as for Wilfred. . . ." He spoke slowly on purpose.

"Well?"

"I didn't see him."

"You didn't. What a shame!" Margaret's eyes flashed.

"I'm beginning to think you're right. But, you know, he's become very queer. He goes about preaching."

"Preaching?"

"Yes, preaching like a street preacher, you know."

"Ah yes," Margaret said, remembering some of Wilfred's talk in the "Rembrandt" studio. She put her forehead between her hands, partly to think, partly to hide

the contraction of pain on her face. And there was a minute's pause. "Poor fellow! he must be very unhappy," she said, with a quiver in her voice.

"Expect he is," Rudolf said. "He lodges with an old servant who used to . . ."

"James Turner?" There was something strange in the vehemence with which Margaret put her question.

"Yes. Did you know him? What did you know about him?"

"He once spoke about him to me."

"Wilfred did. Look here, why didn't you marry Wilfred?"

"Oh, I couldn't. You don't understand. . . . I couldn't explain."

"Look here. You can explain anything to me. I suspect I know as much as you do."

"You do?" she clasped her hands together. But a vast sense of relief came on being able to unprison her secret. "O Rudolf, isn't it awful?"

"It was a bit stiff. I don't know that I don't admire him for it in a way."

"Oh, it was . . ."

"Yes, heroic from your point of view—almost."

Margaret winced.

"You know," Rudolf went on in a friendly voice which was quite sincere with him. (He despised the virtue of compassion, but he was a staunch friend.) "You know I'm not shy about talking of my affairs. And I told you all the bother I had about Carry—Caroline."

"Yes. She's not . . .?"

"Come back again? Course not. I'm as ugly as sin, I know that."

"But what does that matter?"

"Well, I didn't come to talk about myself now. What I was going to say is this. . . . Of course you needn't tell me more than you want to."

"I sha'n't. But you can ask me what you like."

"I don't know what to *ask*."

"I don't see. . . . Why do you want to know anything more?"

"I have a reason," was all Rudolf said.

Margaret's voice quivered as she spoke, showing that tears were not far off.

"I don't like to think of it. It's awful. It seems more awful to me now than it did . . . then. . . ." She looked away from Rudolf and on the ground.

"When?"

"When he . . . he told me."

"Told you? Then why in Heaven's name didn't you marry him?"

"Al! . . . It would have been dreadful if I had, like those two people in that play."

"What play?"

"'Thérèse something;' I saw it in Munich. Two people who've com . . . who've done the same thing together, and they get married. It came back to me. 'They get to hate and hate each other. . . .'"

"So you wouldn't marry Wilfred." He spoke as if that finished the matter.

"Rudolf! I belonged to him. He'd done it for me. But why must we have got married?"

"Oh! And you said that?"

"Ye-es," she answered hesitatingly.

"I *see*. And he'd asked you to marry him?"

Margaret only nodded, still glancing elsewhere.

"And he took up his hat and went away. Oh, of course."

Margaret turned round now and looked angrily at her guest.

"Why do you come to talk about all these old things?" she said.

"I came to tell you what I had heard about Wilfred," Rudolf said.

"Ah yes." The other was subdued once more. "Can't anybody do anything for him? Why can't he marry someone else?"

"Yes, why shouldn't he join the Salvation Army and marry one of the Salvation lasses? They're jolly pretty some of them. Let's hope he will. I'm jolly sorry for the beggar."

To Margaret this tone seemed much too frivolous. They talked a little while on other matters, but with no cordiality on her part. And soon Rudolf rose to go.

"That's no go!" he said to himself as he walked away. "Not that I expected much, as she's engaged. But if she'd been much mashed on Wilfred she might have thrown t'other Johnny over. I'm sorry for the beggar. The thought of him living in those lodgings and *preaching*! But, after all, he may like it. . . . And I may just as well be sorry for myself living alone in lodgings and *painting*." And for a while Rudolf was lost in bitter thought over his own widowed state. Then his intellect asserted itself once more over his sentiments. "I wish I knew exactly *how* he did it. . . . Can't talk about it to Minnie again. That Brightman's Ground I went to look

at is miles off by the road. . . . Of course James Turner helped—whom he lives with now. That is just like melodrama. The faithful old servant, risking his neck to save the family honour!”

THE END.

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Dodo 1 v. — The Rubicon 1 v. — Scarlet and Hyssop 1 v. — The Book of Months 1 v. — The Relentless City 1 v. — Mammon & Co. 2 v. — The Challoners 1 v. — An Act in a Backwater 1 v. — The Image in the Sand 2 v. — The Angel of Pain 2 v. — Paul 2 v. — The House of Defence 2 v. — Sheaves 2 v. — The Climber 2 v. — The Blotting Book 1 v. — A Reaping 1 v. — Daisy's Aunt 1 v. — The Osbornes 1 v.

Benson, Robert Hugh.
The Necromancers 1 v. — A Winnowing 1 v. — None Other Gods 1 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901.
The Revolt of Man 1 v. — Dorothy Forster 2 v. — Children of Gibeon 2 v. —

The World went very well then 2 v. — Katharine Regina 1 v. — Herr Paulus 2 v. — The Inner House 1 v. — The Bell of St. Paul's 2 v. — For Faith and Freedom 2 v. — Armored of Lyonesse 2 v. — Verbena Camellia Stephanotis, etc. 1 v. — Beyond the Dreams of Avarice 2 v. — The Master Craftsman 2 v. — A Fountain Sealed 1 v. — The Orange Girl 2 v. — The Fourth Generation 1 v. — The Lady of Lynn 2 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901, &

James Rice, † 1882.

The Golden Butterfly 2 v. — Ready-Money Mortiboy 2 v. — By Celia's Arbour 2 v.

Betham-Edwards, M.

The Sylvestres 1 v. — Felicia 2 v. — Brother Gabriel 2 v. — Forestalled 1 v. — Exchange no Robbery, and other Novelles 1 v. — Disarmed 1 v. — Doctor Jacob 1 v. — Pearl 1 v. — Next of Kin Wanted 1 v. — The Parting of the Ways 1 v. — For One and the World 1 v. — The Romance of a French Parsonage 1 v. — France of To-day 1 v. — Two Aunts and a Nephew 1 v. — A Dream of Millions 1 v. — The Curb of Honour 1 v. — France of To-day (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Romance of Dijon 1 v. — The Dream-Charlotte 1 v. — A Storm-Rent Sky 1 v. — Reminiscences 1 v. — The Lord of the Harvest 1 v. — Anglo-French Reminiscences, 1875—1899 1 v. — A Suffolk Courtship 1 v. — Mock Beggars' Hall 1 v. — East of Paris 1 v. — A Humble Lover 1 v. — Barham Brocklebank, M.D. 1 v. — Martha Rose, Teacher 1 v.

Bierce, Ambrose (Am.).

In the Midst of Life 1 v.

Birchenough, Mabel C.

Potsherds 1 v.

Bisland, E. (Am.): *vide* Rhoda Broughton.

Bismarck, Prince: *vide* Butler.

Vide also Wilhelm Görlach (Collection of German Authors, p. 29), and Whitman.

Black, William, † 1898.

A Daughter of Heth 2 v. — In Silk Attire 2 v. — The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton 2 v. — A Princess of Thule 2 v. — Kilmeny 1 v. — The Maid of Killeena, and other Stories 1 v. — Three Feathers 2 v. — Lady Silverdale's Sweetheart, and other

Stories 1 v. — Madcap Violet 2 v. — Green Pastures and Piccadilly 2 v. — Maledon of Dare 2 v. — White Wings 2 v. — Sunrise 2 v. — The Beautiful Wretch 1 v. — Mr. Pisistratus Brown, M.P., in the Highlands; The Four Macnicals; The Pupil of Aurelius 1 v. — Shandon Bells (with Portrait) 2 v. — Judith Shakespeare 2 v. — The Wise Women of Inverness, etc. 1 v. — White Heather 2 v. — Sabina Zembra 2 v. — The Strange Adventures of a House-Boat 2 v. — In Far Lochaber 2 v. — The New Prince Fortunatus 2 v. — Stand Fast, Craig-Royston! 2 v. — Donald Ross of Heimra 2 v. — The Magic Ink, and other Tales 1 v. — Wolfenberg 2 v. — The Handsome Humes 2 v. — Highland Cousins 2 v. — Briseis 2 v. — Wild Eelin 2 v.

"Black-Box Murder, the,"

Author of.

The Black-Box Murder 1 v.

Blackmore, Richard Doddridge,

† 1900.

Alice Lorraine 2 v. — Mary Anerley 3 v. — Christowell 2 v. — Tommy Upmore 2 v. — Perlycross 2 v.

"Blackwood."

Tales from "Blackwood" (*First Series*) 1 v. — Tales from "Blackwood" (*Second Series*) 1 v.

Blagden, Isa, † 1873.

The Woman I loved, and the Woman who loved me; A Tuscan Wedding 1 v.

Blessington, Countess of (Marguerite Gardiner), † 1849.

Meredith 1 v. — Strathern 2 v. — Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre 1 v. — Marmaduke Herbert 2 v. — Country Quarters (with Portrait) 2 v.

Bloomfield, Baroness.

Reminiscences of Court and Diplomatic Life (with the Portrait of Her Majesty the Queen) 2 v.

Boldrewood, Rolf.

Robbery under Arms 2 v. — Nevermore 2 v.

Braddon, Miss (Mrs. Maxwell).

Lady Audley's Secret 2 v. — Aurora Floyd 2 v. — Eleanor's Victory 2 v. — John Marchmont's Legacy 2 v. — Henry Dunbar 2 v. — The Doctor's Wife 2 v. — Only a Clod 2 v. — Sir Jasper's Tenant 2 v. — The Lady's Mile 2 v. — Rupert God-

win 2 v. — Dead-Sea Fruit 2 v. — Run to Earth 2 v. — Fenton's Quest 2 v. — The Lovels of Arden 2 v. — Strangers and Pilgrims 2 v. — Lucius Davoren 3 v. — Taken at the Flood 3 v. — Lost for Love 2 v. — A Strange World 2 v. — Hostages to Fortune 2 v. — Dead Men's Shoes 2 v. — Joshua Haggard's Daughter 2 v. — Weavers and Weft 1 v. — In Great Waters, and other Tales 1 v. — An Open Verdict 3 v. — Vixen 3 v. — The Cloven Foot 3 v. — The Story of Barbara 2 v. — Just as I am 2 v. — Asphodel 3 v. — Mount Royal 2 v. — The Golden Calf 2 v. — Flower and Weed 1 v. — Phantom Fortune 3 v. — Under the Red Flag 1 v. — Ishmael 3 v. — Wyllard's Weird 3 v. — One Thing Needful 2 v. — Cut by the County 1 v. — Like and Unlike 2 v. — The Fatal Three 2 v. — The Day will come 2 v. — One Life, One Love 2 v. — Gerard 2 v. — The Venetians 2 v. — All along the River 2 v. — Thou art the Man 2 v. — The Christ-mas Hirelings, etc. 1 v. — Sons of Fire 2 v. — London Pride 2 v. — Rough Justice 2 v. — In High Places 2 v. — His Darling Sin 1 v. — The Infidel 2 v. — The Conflict 2 v. — The Rose of Life 2 v. — Dead Love has Chains 1 v. — During Her Majesty's Pleasure 1 v.

Brassey, Lady, † 1887.

A Voyage in the "Sunbeam" 2 v. — Sunshine and Storm in the East 2 v. — In the Trades, the Tropics and the Roaring Forties 2 v.

"Bread-Winners, the," Author of (Am.).

The Bread-Winners 1 v.

Bret Harte: *vide* Harte.

Brock, Rev. William, † 1875.
Sir Henry Havelock, K. C. B. 1 v.

Brontë, Charlotte: *vide* Currer Bell.

Brontë, Emily & Anne: *vide* Ellis & Acton Bell.

Brooks, Shirley, † 1874.
The Silver Cord 3 v. — Sooner or Later 3 v.

Broome, Lady (Lady Barker).
Station Life in New Zealand 1 v. — Station Amusements in New Zealand 1 v. — A Year's Housekeeping in South

Africa 1 v. — Letters to Guy, and A Distant Shore—Rodrigues 1 v. — Colonial Memories 1 v.

Broughton, Rhoda.

Cometh up as a Flower 1 v. — Not wisely, but too well 2 v. — Red as a Rose is She 2 v. — Tales for Christmas Eve 1 v. — Nancy 2 v. — Joan 2 v. — Second Thoughts 2 v. — Belinda 2 v. — Doctor Cupid 2 v. — Alas! 2 v. — Mrs. Bligh 1 v. — A Beginner 1 v. — Scylla or Charybdis? 1 v. — Dear Faustina 1 v. — The Game and the Candle 1 v. — Foes in Law 1 v. — Lavinia 1 v. — Mamma 1 v. — The Devil and the Deep Sea 1 v.

Broughton, Rhoda, & Elizabeth Bisland (Am.).

A Widower Indeed 1 v.

Brown, John, † 1882.

Rab and his Friends, and other Papers 1 v.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, † 1861.

A Selection from her Poetry (with Portrait) 1 v. — Aurora Leigh 1 v.

Browning, Robert, † 1889.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 4 v.

Bullen, Frank T.

The Cruise of the "Cachalot" 2 v.

Bulwer, Edward, Lord Lytton, † 1873.

Pelham (with Portrait) 1 v. — Eugene Aram 1 v. — Paul Clifford 1 v. — Zanon 1 v. — The Last Days of Pompeii 1 v. — The Disowned 1 v. — Ernest Maltravers 1 v. — Alice 1 v. — Eva, and The Pilgrims of the Rhine 1 v. — Devereux 1 v. — Godolphin and Falkland 1 v. — Rienzi 1 v. — Night and Morning 1 v. — The Last of the Barons 2 v. — Athens 2 v. — The Poems and Ballads of Schiller 1 v. — Lucretia 2 v. — Harold 2 v. — King Arthur 2 v. — The New Timon, and St. Stephen's 1 v. — The Caxtons 2 v. — My Novel 4 v. — What will he do with it? 4 v. — Dramatic Works 2 v. — A Strange Story 1 v. — Caxtoniana 2 v. — The Lost Tales of Mile-tus 1 v. — Miscellaneous Prose Works 4 v. — Odes and Epodes of Horace 2 v. — Kenelm Chillingly 4 v. — The Coming Race 1 v. — The Parisians 4 v. — Pausanias, the Spartan 1 v.

Bulwer, Henry Lytton (Lord Dalling), † 1872.
Historical Characters 2 v. — The Life of Viscount Palmerston 3 v.

Bunyan, John, † 1688.
The Pilgrim's Progress 1 v.
"Buried Alone." Author of (Charles Wood).
Buried Alone 1 v.

Burnett, Mrs. Frances Hodgson (Am.).
Through one Administration 2 v. — Little Lord Fauntleroy 1 v. — Sara Crewe, and Editha's Burglar 1 v. — The Pretty Sister of José 1 v. — A Lady of Quality 2 v. — His Grace of Osmonde 2 v. — The Shuttle 2 v.

Burney, Miss (Madame D'Arblay), † 1840.
Evelina 1 v.

Burns, Robert, † 1796.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Burton, Richard F., † 1890.
A Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina 3 v.

Bury, Baroness de: *vide* "All for Greed."

Butler, A. J.
Bismarck. His Reflections and Reminiscences. Translated from the great German edition, under the supervision of A. J. Butler. With two Portraits. 3 v.

Buxton, Mrs. B. H., † 1881.
Jennie of "The Prince's," 2 v. — Won 2 v. — Great Grenfell Gardens 2 v. — Nell-on and off the Stage 2 v. — From the Wings 2 v.

Byron, Lord, † 1824.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 5 v.

Caffyn, Mrs. Mannington (Iota).
A Yellow Aster 1 v. — Children of Circumstance 2 v. — Anne Mauleverer 2 v.

Caine, Hall.
The Bondman 2 v. — The Manxman 2 v. — The Christian 2 v. — The Eternal City 3 v. — The Prodigal Son 2 v. — The White Prophet 2 v.

Cameron, Verney Lovett.
Across Africa 2 v.

Campbell Praed: *vide* Praed.

Carey, Rosa Nouchette, † 1909.
Not Like other Girls 2 v. — "But Men must Work" 1 v. — Sir Godfrey's Granddaughters 2 v. — The Old, Old Story 2 v. — Herb of Grace 2 v. — The Highway of Fate 2 v. — A Passage Perilous 2 v. — At the Moorings 2 v.

Carlyle, Thomas, † 1881.
The French Revolution 3 v. — Frederick the Great 13 v. — Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 4 v. — The Life of Schiller 1 v.

Carnegie, Andrew (Am.).
Problems of To-Day 1 v.

Carr, Alaric.
Treherne's Temptation 2 v.

Castle, Agnes & Egerton.
The Star Dreamer 2 v. — Incomparable Bellairs 1 v. — Rose of the World 1 v. — French Nan 1 v. — "If Youth but knew!" 1 v. — My Merry Rockhurst 1 v. — Flower o' the Orange 1 v. — Wroth 2 v.

Castle, Egerton.
Consequences 2 v. — "La Bella," and Others 1 v.

Charles, Mrs. Elizabeth Rundle,
† 1896: *vide* Author of "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family."

Charlesworth, Maria Louisa,
† 1880.
Oliver of the Mill 1 v.

Chesterton, G. K.
The Man who was Thursday 1 v. — What's Wrong with the World 1 v.

Cholmondeley, Mary.
Diana Tempest 2 v. — Red Pottage 2 v. — Moth and Rust 1 v. — Prisoners 2 v. — The Lowest Rung 1 v.

Christian, Princess: *vide* Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse.

"Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family," Author of (Mrs.

E. Rundle Charles), † 1896.
Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family 2 v. — The Draytons and the Davenants 2 v. — On Both Sides of the Sea 2 v. — Winifred Bertram 1 v. — Diary of Mrs. Kitty Trevlyan 1 v. —

The Victory of the Vanquished 1 v. — The Cottage by the Cathedral and other Parables 1 v. — Against the Stream 2 v. — The Bertram Family 2 v. — Conquering and to Conquer 1 v. — Lapsed, but not Lost 1 v.

Churchill, Winston (Am.).

Mr. Crewe's Career 2 v.

Clark, Alfred.

The Finding of Lot's Wife 1 v.

Clemens, Samuel L.: *v.* Twain.

Clifford, Mrs. W. K.

Love-Letters of a Worldly Woman 1 v. — Aunt Anne 2 v. — The Last Touches, and other Stories 1 v. — Mrs. Keith's Crime 1 v. — A Wild Proxy 1 v. — A Flash of Summer 1 v. — A Woman Alone 1 v. — Woodside Farm 1 v. — The Modern Way 1 v. — The Getting Well of Dorothy 1 v. — Mere Stories 1 v.

Clive, Mrs. Caroline, † 1873:
vide Author of "Paul Ferroll."

Cobbe, Frances Power, † 1904.
Re-Echoes 1 v.

Coleridge, C. R.

An English Squire 2 v.

Coleridge, M. E.

The King with two Faces 2 v.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor,
† 1834.

Poems 1 v.

Collins, Charles Allston, † 1873.

A Cruise upon Wheels 2 v.

Collins, Mortimer, † 1876.

Sweet and Twenty 2 v. — A Fight with Fortune 2 v.

Collins, Wilkie, † 1889.

After Dark 1 v. — Hide and Seek 2 v. — A Plot in Private Life, etc. 1 v. — The Woman in White 2 v. — Basil 1 v. — No Name 3 v. — The Dead Secret, and other Tales 2 v. — Antonina 2 v. — Armadale 3 v. — The Moonstone 2 v. — Man and Wife 3 v. — Poor Miss Finch 2 v. — Miss or Mrs. ? 1 v. — The New Magdalen 2 v. — The Frozen Deep 1 v. — The Law and the Lady 2 v. — The Two Destinies 1 v. — My Lady's Money, and Percy and the Prophet 1 v. — The Haunted Hotel 1 v. — The Fallen Leaves 2 v. — Jezebel's Daughter 2 v. — The Black Robe 2 v. — Heart and Science 2 v. — "I say No," 2 v. — The Evil Genius 2 v. — The Guilty River, and The

Ghost's Touch 1 v. — The Legacy of Cain 2 v. — Blind Love 2 v.

"Cometh up as a Flower," Author of: *vide* Rhoda Broughton.

Conrad, Joseph.

An Outcast of the Islands 2 v. — Tales of Unrest 1 v. — The Secret Agent 1 v. — A Set of Six 1 v.

Conway, Hugh (F. J. Fergus),
† 1885.

Called Back 1 v. — Bound Together 2 v. — Dark Days 1 v. — A Family Affair 2 v. — Living or Dead 2 v.

Cooper, James Fenimore (Am.),
† 1851.

The Spy (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Two Admirals 1 v. — The Jack O' Lantern 1 v.

Cooper, Mrs.: *vide* Katharine Saunders.

Corelli, Marie.

Vendetta! 2 v. — Thelma 2 v. — A Romance of Two Worlds 2 v. — "Ardath" 3 v. — Wormwood. A Drama of Paris 2 v. — The Hired Baby, with other Stories and Social Sketches 1 v. — Barabbas: A Dream of the World's Tragedy 2 v. — The Sorrows of Satan 2 v. — The Mighty Atom 1 v. — The Murder of Delicia 1 v. — Ziska 1 v. — Boy. A Sketch. 2 v. — The Master-Christian 2 v. — "Temporal Power" 2 v. — God's Good Man 2 v. — Free Opinions 1 v. — Treasure of Heaven (with Portrait) 2 v. — Holy Orders 2 v.

Cotes, Mrs. Everard.

Those Delightful Americans 1 v. — Set in Authority 1 v. — Cousin Cinderella 1 v.

"County, the," Author of.

The County 1 v.

Craik, George Lillie, † 1866.

A Manual of English Literature and of the History of the English Language 2 v.

Craik, Mrs. (Miss Dinah M. Mulock), † 1887.

John Halifax, Gentleman 2 v. — The Head of the Family 2 v. — A Life for a Life 2 v. — A Woman's Thoughts about Women 1 v. — Agatha's Husband 1 v. — Romantic Tales 1 v. — Domestic Stories 1 v. — Mistress and Maid 1 v. — The Ogilvies 1 v. — Lord Erlistoun 1 v. — Christian's Mistake 1 v. — Bread upon the Waters 1 v. — A Noble Life 1 v. — Olive 2 v. — Two Marriages 1 v. — Studies

from Life 1 v. — Poems 1 v. — The Woman's Kingdom 2 v. — The Unkind Word, and other Stories 2 v. — A Brave Lady 2 v. — Hannah 2 v. — Fair France 1 v. — My Mother and I 1 v. — The Little Lame Prince 1 v. — Sermons out of Church 1 v. — The Laurel-Bush; Two little Tinkers 1 v. — A Legacy 2 v. — Young Mrs. Jardine 2 v. — His Little Mother, and other Tales and Sketches 1 v. — Plain Speaking 1 v. — Miss Tommy 1 v. — King Arthur 1 v.

Craik, Georgiana M. (Mrs. May).
Lost and Won 1 v. — Faith Unwin's Ordeal 1 v. — Leslie Tyrrell 1 v. — Winifred's Wooing, etc. 1 v. — Mildred 1 v. — Esther Hill's Secret 2 v. — Hero Trevelyan 1 v. — Without Kith or Kin 2 v. — Only a Butterfly 1 v. — Sylvia's Choice; Theresa 2 v. — Anne Warwick 1 v. — Dorcas 2 v. — Two Women 2 v.

Craik, Georgiana M., & M. C. Stirling.
Two Tales of Married Life (Hard to Bear, by Miss Craik; A True Man, by M. C. Stirling) 2 v.

Craven, Mrs. Augustus: vide
Lady Fullerton.

Crawford, F. Marion (Am.),
† 1909.

Mr. Isaacs 1 v. — Doctor Claudius 1 v. — To Leeward 1 v. — A Roman Singer 1 v. — An American Politician 1 v. — Zoroaster 1 v. — A Tale of a Lonely Parish 2 v. — Saracinesca 2 v. — Marzio's Crucifix 1 v. — Paul Patoff 2 v. — With the Immortals 1 v. — Greifenstein 2 v. — Sant' Ilario 2 v. — A Cigarette-Maker's Romance 1 v. — Khaled 1 v. — The Witch of Prague 2 v. — The Three Fates 2 v. — Don Orsino 2 v. — The Children of the King 1 v. — Pietro Ghisleri 2 v. — Marion Darche 1 v. — Katharine Lauderdale 2 v. — The Ralstons 2 v. — Casa Braccio 2 v. — Adam Johnstone's Son 1 v. — Taquisara 2 v. — A Rose of Yesterday 1 v. — Corleone 2 v. — Via Crucis 2 v. — In the Palace of the King 2 v. — Marietta, a Maid of Venice 2 v. — Cecilia 2 v. — The Heart of Rome 2 v. — Whosoever Shall Offend... 2 v. — Soprano 2 v. — A Lady of Rome 2 v. — Arethusa 2 v. — The Primadonna 2 v. — The Diva's Ruby 2 v. — The White Sister 1 v. — Stradella 1 v. — The Undesirable Governess 1 v.

Crockett, S. R.
The Raiders 2 v. — Cleg Kelly 2 v. —

The Grey Man 2 v. — Love Idylls 1 v. — The Dark o' the Moon 2 v.

Croker, B. M.

Peggy of the Bartons 2 v. — The Happy Valley 1 v. — The Old Cantonment, with Other Stories of India and Elsewhere 1 v. — A Nine Days' Wonder 1 v. — The Youngest Miss Mowbray 1 v. — The Company's Servant 2 v. — The Cat's-Paw 1 v. — Katherine the Arrogant 1 v. — Fame 1 v. — Babes in the Wood 1 v.

Cross, J. W.: vide George Eliot's Life.

Cudlip, Mrs. Pender: vide A. Thomas.

Cummins, Miss (Am.), † 1866.
The Lamplighter 1 v. — Mabel Vaughan 1 v. — El Fureidis 1 v. — Haunted Hearts 1 v.

Cushing, Paul.
The Blacksmith of Voe 2 v.

"Daily News."
War Correspondence, 1877, by Archibald Forbes and others 3 v.

Danby, Frank.
The Heart of a Child 2 v. — An Incomplete Etonian 2 v. — Let the Roof fall in 2 v.

"Dark," Author of.
Dark 1 v.

Davis, Richard Harding (Am.).
Gallegher, etc. 1 v. — Van Bibber and Others 1 v. — Ranson's Folly 1 v.

De Foe, Daniel, † 1731.
Robinson Crusoe 1 v.

Deland, Margaret (Am.).
John Ward, Preacher 1 v.

"Democracy," Author of (Am.).
Democracy 1 v.

De Morgan, William.
Joseph Vance 2 v.

"Demos," Author of: *vide* George Gissing.

De Quincey, Thomas.
Confessions of an English Opium-Eater 1 v.

"Diary and Notes": vide Author of "Horace Templeton."

Dickens, Charles, † 1870.
The Pickwick Club (with Portrait) 2 v. — American Notes 1 v. — Oliver Twist 1 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas

Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock (Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Pictures from Italy 1 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — A Child's History of England (2 v. 80 M. 2, 70.) — Hard Times 1 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — The Battle of Life; The Haunted Man 1 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Hunted Down; The Uncommercial Traveller 1 v. — Great Expectations 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — Somebody's Luggage; Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings; Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy 1 v. — Doctor Mari-gold's Prescriptions; Mugby Junction 1 v. — The Mystery of Edwin Drood (with Illustrations) 2 v. — The Mudfog Papers, 1 v. — The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. by his Sister-in-law and his eldest Daughter 4 v. — *Vide* also Household Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

Dickens, Charles, & Wilkie Collins.

No Thoroughfare; The Late Miss Hol-lingford 1 v.

Disraeli, Benjamin, Lord Beaconsfield, † 1881.

Coningsby 1 v. — Sybil 1 v. — Contarini Fleming (with Portrait) 1 v. — Alroy 1 v. — Tancred 2 v. — Venetia 2 v. — Vivian Grey 2 v. — Henrietta Temple 1 v. — Lothair 2 v. — Endymion 2 v.

Dixon, Ella Hepworth.

The Story of a Modern Woman 1 v. — One Doubtful Hour 1 v.

Dixon, W. Hepworth, † 1879.

Personal History of Lord Bacon 1 v. — The Holy Land 2 v. — New America 2 v. — Spiritual Wives 2 v. — Her Majesty's Tower 4 v. — Free Russia 2 v. — History of two Queens 6 v. — White Conquest 2 v. — Diana, Lady Lyle 2 v.

Dixon, Jr., Thomas, (Am.).

The Leopard's Spots 2 v.

Dougall, L.

Beggars All 2 v.

Dowie, Méné Muriel.

A Girl in the Karpethians 1 v.

Doyle, Sir A. Conan.

The Sign of Four 1 v. — Micah Clarke 2 v. — The Captain of the Pole-Star, and other Tales 1 v. — The White Company 2 v. — A Study in Scarlet 1 v. — The

Great Shadow, and Beyond the City 1 v. — The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — The Refugees 2 v. — The Firm of Girdlestone 2 v. — The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Round the Red Lamp 1 v. — The Stark Munro Letters 1 v. — The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard 1 v. — Rodney Stone 2 v. — Uncle Bernac 1 v. — The Tragedy of the Korosko 1 v. — A Duet 1 v. — The Green Flag 1 v. — The Great Boer War 2 v. — The War in South Africa 1 v. — The Hound of the Baskervilles 1 v. — Adventures of Gerard 1 v. — The Return of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Sir Nigel 2 v. — Through the Magic Door 1 v. — Round the Fire Stories 1 v. — The Mystery of Cloombere 1 v.

Drummond, Professor Henry, † 1897.

The Greatest Thing in the World; Pax Vobiscum; The Changed Life 1 v.

Dufferin, the Earl of.

Letters from High Latitudes 1 v.

Duncan, Sara Jeannette: *vide* Mrs. Cotes.

Dunton: *vide* Th. Watts-Dun-ton.

Earl, the, and the Doctor.

South Sea Bubbles 1 v.

Eastwick, Edward L., † 1883.

Autobiography of Lutfulah 1 v.

Edgeworth, Maria, *vide* Series for the Young, p. 29.

Edwardes, Mrs. Annie.

Archie Lovell 2 v. — Steven Lawrence, Yeoman 2 v. — Ought we to visit her? 2 v. — A Vagabond Heroine 1 v. — Leah: A Woman of Fashion 2 v. — A Blue-Stocking 1 v. — Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune? 1 v. — Vivian the Beauty 1 v. — A Ball-room Repentance 2 v. — A Girton Girl 2 v. — A Playwright's Daughter, and Bertie Griffiths 1 v. — Pearl-Powder 1 v. The Adventuress 1 v.

Edwards, Amelia B., † 1892.

Barbara's History 2 v. — Miss Carew 2 v. — Hand and Glove 1 v. — Half a Mil-lion of Money 2 v. — Debenham's Vow 2 v. — In the Days of my Youth 2 v. — Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Val-leys 1 v. — Monsieur Maurice 1 v. — A Night on the Borders of the Black Forest 1 v. — A Poetry-Book of Elder Poets

1 v. — A Thousand Miles up the Nile 2 v. —
A Poetry-Book of Modern Poets 1 v. —
Lord Brackenbury 2 v.

Edwards, M. Betham: *vide*
Betham.

Eggleston, Edward (Am.), † 1902.
The Faith Doctor 2 v.

Elbon, Barbara (Am.).
Bethesda 2 v.

Eliot, George (Miss Evans—
Mrs. Cross), † 1880.
Scenes of Clerical Life 2 v. — Adam
Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. —
Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix
Holt 2 v. — Daniel Deronda 4 v. — The
Lifted Veil, and Brother Jacob 1 v. —
Impressions of Theophrastus Such 1 v. —
Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book
1 v. — George Eliot's Life, edited by her
Husband, J. W. Cross 4 v.

"Elizabeth and her German
Garden," Author of.
Elizabeth and her German Garden 1 v. —
The Solitary Summer 1 v. — The Bene-
factress 2 v. — Princess Priscilla's Fort-
night 1 v. — The Adventures of Elizabeth
in Rügen 1 v. — Fräulein Schmidt and Mr.
Anstruther 1 v.

Elliott, Mrs. Frances, † 1898.
Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy 2 v. —
Old Court Life in France 2 v. — The
Italians 2 v. — The Diary of an Idle
Woman in Sicily 1 v. — Pictures of Old
Rome 1 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in
Spain 2 v. — The Red Cardinal 1 v. —
The Story of Sophia 1 v. — Diary of an
Idle Woman in Constantinople 1 v. —
Old Court Life in Spain 2 v. — Roman
Gossip 1 v.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (Am.),
† 1882.
Representative Men 1 v.

"Englishwoman's Love-Let-
ters, an," Author of.
An Englishwoman's Love-Letters 1 v.

Erroll, Henry.
An Ugly Duckling 1 v.

Esler, E. Rentoul.
The Way they loved at Grimpat 1 v.

"Essays and Reviews," the
Authors of.
Essays and Reviews. By various Authors
1 v.

"Estelle Russell," Author of.
Estelle Russell 2 v.

Esterre-Keeling, Elsa D'.
Three Sisters 1 v. — A Laughing Philo-
sopher 1 v. — The Professor's Wooing 1 v.
— In Thoughtland and in Dreamland
1 v. — Orchardscroft 1 v. — Appassionata
1 v. — Old Maids and Young 2 v. — The
Queen's Serf 1 v.

"Euthanasia," Author of.
Euthanasia 1 v.

Ewing, Juliana Horatia, † 1885.
Jackanapes; The Story of a Short Life;
Daddy Darwin's Dovecot 1 v. — A Flat
Iron for a Farthing 1 v. — The Brownies,
and other Tales 1 v.

"Expiated," Author of.
Expiated 2 v.

Fargus, F. J.: *vide* Hugh Con-
way.

Farrar, F. W. (Dean), † 1903.
Darkness and Dawn 3 v.

"Fate of Fenella, the," Authors
of.
The Fate of Fenella, by 24 Authors 1 v.

Felkin, Alfred Laurence: *vide*
E. T. Fowler.

Felkin, Mrs.: *vide* E. T. Fowler.
Fendall, Percy: *vide* F. C.
Philips.

Fenn, George Manville.
The Parson o' Dumford 2 v. — The
Clerk of Portwick 2 v.

Fielding, Henry, † 1754.
Tom Jones 2 v.

Findlater, Mary & Jane (Am.):
vide Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Fitzgerald, Edward.
Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám 1 v.

Five Centuries
of the English Language and Literature:
John Wycliffe. — Geoffrey Chaucer. —
Stephen Hawes. — Sir Thomas More. —
Edmund Spenser. — Ben Jonson. — John
Locke. — Thomas Gray (vol. 500, published
1860) 1 v.

Fleming, George (Am.).
Kismet 1 v. — Andromeda 2 v.

Forbes, Archibald, † 1900.

My Experiences of the War between France and Germany 2 v. — Soldiering and Scribbling 1 v. — Memories and Studies of War and Peace 2 v. — *Vide* also "Daily News," War Correspondence.

Forrest, R. E.

Eight Days 2 v.

Forrester, Mrs.

Viva 2 v. — Rhona 2 v. — Roy and Viola 2 v. — My Lord and My Lady 2 v. — I have Lived and Loved 2 v. — June 2 v. — Omnia Vanitas 1 v. — Although he was a Lord, and other Tales 1 v. — Corisande, and other Tales 1 v. — Once Again 2 v. — Of the World, Worldly 1 v. — Dearest 2 v. — The Light of other Days 1 v. — Too Late Repented 1 v.

Forster, John, † 1876.

The Life of Charles Dickens (with Illustrations and Portraits) 6 v. — Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith 2 v.

Fothergill, Jessie.

The First Violin 2 v. — Probation 2 v. — Made or Marred, and "One of Three" 1 v. — Kith and Kin 2 v. — Peril 2 v. — Borderland 2 v.

"Found Dead," Author of: *vide* James Payn.

Fowler, Ellen Thorneycroft
(Mrs. Alfred Laurence Felkin).

A Double Thread 2 v. — The Farrings 2 v. — Fuel of Fire 1 v. — Place and Power 2 v. — In Subjection 2 v. — Miss Fallowfield's Fortune 1 v.

Fowler, Ellen Thorneycroft
(Mrs. A. L. Felkin) & Alfred Laurence Felkin.

Kate of Kate Hall 2 v.

Fox, Caroline, † 1871.

Memories of Old Friends from her Journals and Letters, edited by Horace N. Pym 2 v.

"Frank Fairleigh," Author of
(F. E. Smedley), † 1864.

Frank Fairleigh 2 v.

Francis, M. E.

The Duenna of a Genius 1 v.

Frederic, Harold (Am.), † 1898.

Illumination 2 v. — March Hares 1 v.

Freeman, Edward A., † 1892.

The Growth of the English Constitution

1 v. — Select Historical Essays 1 v. — Sketches from French Travel 1 v.

Froude, James Anthony, † 1894.
Oceana 1 v. — The Spanish Story of the Armada, and other Essays 1 v.

Fullerton, Lady Georgiana,
† 1885.

Ellen Middleton 1 v. — Grantley Manor 2 v. — Lady Bird 2 v. — Too Strange not to be True 2 v. — Constance Sherwood 2 v. — A Stormy Life 2 v. — Mrs. Gerald's Niece 2 v. — The Notary's Daughter 1 v. — The Lilies of the Valley, and The House of Penarvan 1 v. — The Countess de Bonneval 1 v. — Rose Leblanc 1 v. — Seven Stories 1 v. — The Life of Luisa de Carvajal 1 v. — A Will and a Way, and The Handkerchief at the Window 2 v. — Eliane 2 v. (by Mrs. Augustus Craven, translated by Lady Fullerton). — Laurentia 1 v.

Galsworthy, John.

The Man of Property 2 v. — The Country House 1 v. — Fraternity 1 v. — Villa Ruben 1 v. — A Man of Devon, etc. 1 v. — A Motley 1 v.

Gardiner, Marguerite: *vide*
Lady Blessington.

Gaskell, Mrs., † 1865.

Mary Barton 1 v. — Ruth 2 v. — North and South 1 v. — Lizzie Leigh, and other Tales 1 v. — The Life of Charlotte Brontë 2 v. — Lois the Witch, etc. 1 v. — Sylvia's Lovers 2 v. — A Dark Night's Work 1 v. — Wives and Daughters 3 v. — Cranford 1 v. — Cousin Phillis, and other Tales 1 v.

"Geraldine Hawthorne," Author
of: *v.* Author of "Miss Molly."

Gerard, Dorothea (Madame Longard de Longgarde).

Lady Baby 2 v. — Recha 1 v. — Orthodox 1 v. — The Wrong Man 1 v. — A Spotless Reputation 1 v. — A Forgotten Sin 1 v. — One Year 1 v. — The Supreme Crime 1 v. — The Blood-Tax 1 v. — Holy Matrimony 1 v. — The Eternal Woman 1 v. — Made of Money 1 v. — The Bridge of Life 1 v. — The Three Essentials 1 v. — The Improbable Idyl 1 v. — The Compromise 2 v. — Itinerant Daughters 1 v. — Restitution 1 v. — Pomp and Circumstance 1 v. — The Grass Widow 1 v.

Gerard, E. (Emily de Łaszowska).
A Secret Mission 1 v. — A Foreigner 2 v. — The Extermination of Love 2 v.

Giberne, Agnes.

The Curate's Home 1 v.

Gissing, George, † 1903.

Demos 2 v. — New Grub Street 2 v.

Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E.,

† 1898.

Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion 1 v. — Bulgarian Horrors, and Russia in Turkistan, with other Tracts 1 v. — The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem, with other Tracts 1 v.

Glyn, Elinor.

The Visits of Elizabeth 1 v. — The Reflections of Ambrosine 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Evangeline 1 v. — Beyond the Rocks 1 v. — Three Weeks 1 v. — Elizabeth Visits America 1 v. — His Hour 1 v.

Godfrey, Hal: vide Charlotte O'Connor Eccles.**Goldsmith, Oliver, † 1774.**

Select Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Goodman, Edward J.

Too Curious 1 v.

Gordon, Julien (Am.).

A Diplomat's Diary 1 v.

Gordon, Major-Gen. C. G.,

† 1885.

His Journals at Kartoum (with eighteen illustrations) 2 v.

Gore, Mrs., † 1861.

Castles in the Air 1 v. — The Dean's Daughter 2 v. — Progress and Prejudice 2 v. — Mammon 2 v. — A Life's Lessons 2 v. — The Two Aristocracies 2 v. — Heckington 2 v.

Grand, Sarah.

Our Manifold Nature 1 v. — Babs the Impossible 2 v. — Emotional Moments 1 v.

Grant, Miss.

Victor Lascar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v. — My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. — Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v. — Cara Roma 2 v.

Gray, Maxwell.

The Silence of Dean Maitland 2 v. — The Reproach of Annesley 2 v.

Grenville: Murray, E. C. (Trois-

Etoiles), † 1881.

The Member for Paris 2 v. — Young Brown 2 v. — The Boudoir Cabal 3 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*First Series*) 2 v. — The Russians of To-day

1 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*Second Series*) 2 v. — Strange Tales 1 v. — That Artful Vicar 2 v. — Six Months in the Ranks 1 v. — People I have met 1 v.

Grimwood, Ethel St. Clair.

My Three Years in Manipur (with Portrait) 1 v.

Grohman, W. A. Baillie.

Tyrol and the Tyrolese 1 v.

Gunter, A. C. (Am.), † 1907.

Mr. Barnes of New York 1 v.

Guthrie, F. Anstey: vide Anstey.

"Guy Livingstone," Author of (George Alfred Laurence),

† 1876.

Guy Livingstone 1 v. — Sword and Gown 1 v. — Barren Honour 1 v. — Border and Bastille 1 v. — Maurice Dering 1 v. — Sans Merci 2 v. — Breaking a Butterfly 2 v. — Anteros 2 v. — Hagarène 2 v.

Habberton, John (Am.).

Helen's Babies & Other People's Children 1 v. — The Bowsham Puzzle 1 v. — One Tramp; Mrs. Mayburn's Twins 1 v.

Haggard, H. Rider.

King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. — Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge 1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. — Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn 2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. — Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard 1 v. — Doctor Thorne 1 v. — Swallow 2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart, and Elissa 1 v. — Lysbeth 2 v. — A Winter Pilgrimage 2 v. — Pearl-Maiden 2 v. — Stella Fregelius 2 v. — The Brethren 2 v. — Ayesha. The Return of 'She' 2 v. — The Way of the Spirit 2 v. — Benita 1 v. — Fair Margaret 2 v. — The Lady of Blossholme 1 v. — Morning Star 1 v. — Queen Sheba's Ring 1 v.

Haggard, H. Rider, & Andrew Lang.

The World's Desire 2 v.

Hake, A. E.: vide Gen. Gordon.**Hall, Mrs. S. C., † 1881.**

Can Wrong be Right? 1 v. — Marian 2 v.

Hamerton, Philip Gilbert,

† 1894.

Marmorne 1 v. — French and English 2 v.

Hardy, Miss Iza: *vide* Author of
"Not Easily Jealous."

Hardy, Thomas.

The Hand of Ethelberta 2 v. — Far from the Madding Crowd 2 v. — The Return of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. — A Group of Noble Dames 1 v. — Tess of the D'Urbervilles 2 v. — Life's Little Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v.

Harland, Henry (Am.), † 1905.
The Cardinal's Snuff-Box 1 v. — The Lady Paramount 1 v. — My Friend Prospero 1 v. — The Royal End 1 v.

Harraden, Beatrice.

Ships that pass in the Night 1 v. — In Varying Moods 1 v. — Hilda Strafford, and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The Fowler 2 v. — Katharine Frensham 2 v. — The Scholar's Daughter 1 v. — Interplay 2 v.

Harrison, Agnes.

Martin's Vineyard 1 v.

Harrison, Mrs.: v. Lucas Malet.

Harte, Bret (Am.), † 1902.

Prose and Poetry (Tales of the Argonauts; — The Luck of Roaring Camp; The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. — Spanish and American Legends; Condensed Novels; Civic and Character Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Idyls of the Foothills 1 v. — Gabriel Conroy 2 v. — Two Men of Sandy Bar 1 v. — Thankful Blossom, and other Tales 1 v. — The Story of a Mine 1 v. — Drift from Two Shores 1 v. — An Heiress of Red Dog, and other Sketches 1 v. — The Twins of Table Mountain, and other Tales 1 v. — Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales 1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — On the Frontier 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge 1 v. — Maruja 1 v. — Snow-bound at Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — A Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready, and other Tales 1 v. — Captain Jim's Friend, and the Argonauts of North Liberty 1 v. — Cressy 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A Waif of the Plains 1 v. — A Ward of the Golden Gate 1 v. — A Sappho of Green Springs, and other Tales 1 v. — A First Family of Tasajara 1 v. — Colonel Starbottle's Client, and some other People 1 v. — Susy 1 v. — Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — A Protégée of Jack Hamlin's, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-

langer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — Clarence 1 v. — In a Hollow of the Hills, and The Devotion of Enriquez 1 v. — The Ancestors of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Three Partners 1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. — Stories in Light and Shadow 1 v. — Mr. Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories 1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v. — Under the Redwoods 1 v. — On the Old Trail 1 v. — Trent's Trust 1 v.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel (Am.),

† 1864.

The Scarlet Letter 1 v. — Transformation (The Marble Faun) 2 v. — Passages from his English Note-Books 2 v.

Hay, John (Am.), † 1905: v. "The Bread Winners," Author of.

Hearn, Lafcadio, † 1906.

Kokoro 1 v. — Kwaidan 1 v. — Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*First Series*) 1 v. — Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan (*Second Series*) 1 v. — Gleanings in Buddha-Fields 1 v. — Out of the East 1 v. — The Romance of the Milky Way, and Other Studies and Stories 1 v.

Hector, Mrs.: vide Mrs. Alexander.

"Heir of Redclyffe, the," Author of: *vide* Charlotte M. Yonge.

Helps, Sir Arthur, † 1875.

Friends in Council 2 v. — Ivan de Biron 2 v.

Hemans, Mrs. Felicia, † 1835.
Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Hewlett, Maurice.

The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels of Italy 1 v. — The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay 2 v. — New Canterbury Tales 1 v. — The Queen's Quair; or, The Six Years' Tragedy 2 v. — Fond Adventures 1 v. — The Fool Errant 2 v. — The Stopping Lady 1 v. — The Spanish Jade 1 v. — Halfway House 2 v. — Open Country 1 v.

Hichens, Robert.

Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v. — Felix 2 v. — The Woman with the Fan 2 v. — The Garden of Allah 2 v. — The Black Spaniel, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Call of the Blood 2 v. — A Spirit in Prison 2 v. — Barbary Sheep 1 v. — Bella Donna 2 v. — The Spell of Egypt 1 v.

Hobart Pasha, Admiral, † 1886.
Sketches from my Life 1 v.

Hobbes, John Oliver (Mrs. Craigie) (Am.), † 1906.

The Gods, Some Mortals and Lord Wickenham 1 v. — The Serious Wooing 1 v. — The Dream and the Business 2 v.

Hoey, Mrs. Cashel.

A Golden Sorrow 2 v. — Out of Court 2 v.

Holdsworth, Annie E.

The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v. — Great Lowlands 1 v. — A Garden of Spinsters 1 v.

Holme Lee: vide Harriet Parr.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (Am.),

† 1894.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Professor at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Poet at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — Over the Teacups 1 v.

Hope, Anthony (Hawkins).

Mr. Witt's Widow 1 v. — A Change of Air 1 v. — Half a Hero 1 v. — The Indiscretion of the Duchess 1 v. — The God in the Car 1 v. — The Chronicles of Count Antonio 1 v. — Comedies of Courtship 1 v. — The Heart of Princess Osra 1 v. — Phroso 2 v. — Simon Dale 2 v. — Rupert of Hentzau 1 v. — The King's Mirror 2 v. — Quisante 1 v. — Tristram of Blent 2 v. — The Intrusions of Peggy 2 v. — Double Harness 2 v. — A Servant of the Public 2 v. — Sophy of Kravonia 2 v. — Tales of Two People 2 v. — The Great Miss Driver 2 v.

Hopkins, Tighe.

An Idler in Old France 1 v. — The Man in the Iron Mask 1 v. — The Dungeons of Old Paris 1 v. — The Silent Gate 1 v. — The Women Napoleon Loved 1 v.

"Horace Templeton," Author of.

Diary and Notes 1 v.

Hornung, Ernest William.

A Bride from the Bush 1 v. — Under Two Skies 1 v. — Tiny Luttrell 1 v. — The Boss of Taroomba 1 v. — My Lord Duke 1 v. — Young Blood 1 v. — Some Persons Unknown 1 v. — The Amateur Crackman 1 v. — The Rogue's March 1 v. — The Belle of Toorak 1 v. — Peccavi 1 v. — The Black Mask 1 v. — The Shadow of the Rope 1 v. — No Hero 1 v. — Denis Dent 1 v. — Irralie's Bushranger and The Unbidden Guest 1 v. — Singaree 1 v. — A Thief in the Night 1 v. — Dead Men Tell No Tales 1 v. — Mr. Justice Raffles 1 v.

"Household Words."

Conducted by Charles Dickens. 1851-56. 36 v. — NOVELS and TALES reprinted from Household Words by Charles Dickens. 1856-59. 11 v.

Houstoun, Mrs.: vide "Recommended to Mercy."

"How to be Happy though Married," Author of.

How to be Happy though Married 1 v.

Howard, Blanche Willis (Am.), † 1898.

One Summer 1 v. — Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v. — The Open Door 2 v.

Howard, Blanche Willis, † 1898, & William Sharp (Am.), † 1905.

A Fellow and His Wife 1 v.

Howells, William Dean (Am.).

A Foregone Conclusion 1 v. — The Lady of the Aroostook 1 v. — A Modern Instance 2 v. — The Undiscovered Country 1 v. — Venetian Life (with Portrait) 1 v. — Italian Journeys 1 v. — A Chance Acquaintance 1 v. — Their Wedding Journey 1 v. — A Fearful Responsibility, and Tonelli's Marriage 1 v. — A Woman's Reason 2 v. — Dr. Breen's Practice 1 v. — The Rise of Silas Lapham 2 v. — A Pair of Patient Lovers 1 v. — Miss Bellard's Inspiration 1 v.

Hughes, Thomas, † 1898.

Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Hungerford, Mrs. (Mrs. Argles),

† 1897.

Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Portia 2 v. — Loÿs, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Her First Appearance, and other Tales 1 v. — Phyllis 2 v. — Rossmoyne 2 v. — Doris 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Brankmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A Modern Circe 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — A Conquering Heroine, and "When in Doubt" 1 v. — Nora

Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — The Red House Mystery 1 v. — An Unsatisfactory Lover 1 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — The Three Graces 1 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Hunt, Mrs.: *vide* Beaumont.

Hunt, Violet.

The Human Interest 1 v. — White Rose of Weary Leaf 2 v. — The Wife of Altamont 1 v.

Hutten, Baroness von (Am.).

The Halo 1 v. — Kingsmead 1 v. — The Lordship of Love 2 v. — The Green Patch 1 v.

Ingelow, Jean, † 1897.

Off the Skelligs 3 v. — Poems 2 v. — Fated to be Free 2 v. — Sarah de Berenger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

Inglis, the Hon. Lady.

The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

Ingram, John H.: *vide* Poe.

Iota: *vide* Mrs. Caffyn.

Irving, Washington (Am.), † 1859.

The Sketch Book (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Jackson, Mrs. Helen (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.

Ramona 2 v.

Jacobs, W. W.

Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of Craft 1 v. — Light Freights 1 v. — At Sun-
wich Port 1 v. — The Lady of the Barge 1 v. — Odd Craft 1 v. — Dialstone Lane 1 v. — Captains All 1 v. — Short Cruises 1 v. — Salthaven 1 v. — Sailors' Knots 1 v.

James, Charles T. C.

Holy Wedlock 1 v.

James, G. P. R., † 1860.

Morley Ernstein (with Portrait) 1 v. — Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. — Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — The Castle of

Ehrenstein 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — The Convict 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

James, Henry (Am.).

The American 2 v. — The Europeans 1 v. — Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Eugene Pickering, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — French Poets and Novelists 1 v. — The Siege of London; The Point of View; A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v. — The Finer Grain 1 v.

James, Winifred.

Bachelor Betty 1 v.

Jeaffreson, J. Cordy.

A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Jenkin, Mrs. Charles, † 1885.

"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Within an Ace 1 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Jenkins, Edward.

Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

"Jennie of 'The Prince's,'"

Author of: *vide* B. H. Buxton.

Jerome, K. Jerome.

The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v. — Paul Kelter 2 v. — Tea-Table Talk 1 v. — Tommy and Co. 1 v. — Idle Ideas in 1905 1 v. — The Passing of the Third Floor Back 1 v. — The Angel and the Author—and Others 1 v. — They and I, 1 v.

Jerrold, Douglas, † 1857.

History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

"John Halifax, Gentleman,"

Author of: *vide* Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow: *vide* Mrs.

Henry Wood.

Johnson, Samuel, † 1784.

Lives of the English Poets 2 v.

Jolly, Emily.

Colonel Dacre 2 v.

"Joshua Davidson," Author of:
vide Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

Kavanagh, Miss Julia, † 1877.

Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. — Grace Lee 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v. — French Women of Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen Mab 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Sybil's Second Love 2 v. — Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-nots 2 v. — *vide* Series for the Young, p. 29.

Keary, Annie, † 1879.

Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.

Keeling, D'Esterre-: *vide* Esterre.

Kempis, Thomas a.

The Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin by W. Benham, A.D. 1 v.

Kimball, Richard B. (Am.), † 1892.

Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student Life Abroad 1 v. — Undercurrents 1 v. — Was he Successful? 1 v. — To-Day in New York 1 v.

Kinglake, A. W., † 1891.

Eothen 1 v. — The Invasion of the Crimea 14 v.

Kingsley, Charles, † 1875.

Yeast 1 v. — Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v. — Hypatia 2 v. — Alton Locke 1 v. — Hereward the Wake 2 v. — At Last 2 v. — His Letters and Memories of his Life, edited by his Wife 2 v.

Kingsley, Henry, † 1876.

Ravenshoe 2 v. — Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hillyars and the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. — Valentin 1 v. — Oakshott Castle 1 v. — Reginald Hethetge 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.

Kinross, Albert.

An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.

Kipling, Rudyard.

Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous" 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful Night 1 v. — Kim 1 v. — Just So Stories 1 v.

— The Five Nations 1 v. — Traffics and Discoveries 1 v. — Puck of Pook's Hill 1 v. — Actions and Reactions 1 v. — Rewards and Fairies 1 v.

Laffan, May.

Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor 1 v.

Lamb, Charles, † 1834.

The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v.

Lang, Andrew: *vide* H. Rider Haggard.

Langdon, Mary (Am.).

Ida May 1 v.

"Last of the Cavaliers, the,"

Author of (Miss Piddington).

The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The Gain of a Loss 2 v.

Łaszowska, Mme de: *vide* E. Gerard.

Laurence, George Alfred: *vide*

"Guy Livingstone."

Lawless, the Hon. Emily.

Hurriah 1 v.

"Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands:"
vide Victoria R. I.

Lee, Holme, † 1900: *vide* Harriet Parr.

Lee, Vernon.

Pope Jacynth, etc. 1 v. — Genius Loci, and The Enchanted Woods 1 v. — Hortus Vitae, and Limbo 1 v. — The Spirit of Rome, and Laurus Nobilis 1 v.

Le Fanu, J. S., † 1873.

Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.

Lemon, Mark, † 1870.

Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.

"Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth, the," Author of:
vide W. R. H. Trowbridge.

Lever, Charles, † 1872.

The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of

Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. — The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The Fortunes of Glencore 2 v. — Roland Cashel

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- Macquoid, Mrs.**
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- Maine, E. S.**
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- Malet, Sir Edward, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.**
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- Malet, Lucas (Mrs. Mary St. Leger Harrison).**
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- Mann, Mary E.**
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The Fatal Phryne 1 v. — The Scudamores 1 v. — A Maiden Fair to See 1 v. — Sybil Ross's Marriage 1 v.

Phillipotts, Eden.

Lying Prophets 2 v. — The Human Boy 1 v. — Sons of the Morning 2 v. — The Good Red Earth 1 v. — The Striking Hours 1 v. — The Farm of the Dagger 1 v. —

The Golden Fetic 1 v. — The Whirlwind 2 v. — The Human Boy Again 1 v.

Phillpotts, E. & Arnold Bennett. The Sinews of War 1 v. — The Statue 1 v.

Piddington, Miss: *vide* Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers."

Poe, Edgar Allan (Am.), † 1849. Poems and Essays, edited with a new Memoir by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Tales, edited by John H. Ingram 1 v.

Pope, Alexander, † 1744. Select Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Poynter, Miss E. Frances. My Little Lady 2 v. — Ersilia 2 v. — Among the Hills 1 v. — Madame de Presnel 1 v.

Praed, Mrs. Campbell. Zero 1 v. — Affinities 1 v. — The Head Station 2 v.

Prentiss, Mrs. E. (Am.), † 1878. Stepping Heavenward 1 v.

Prince Consort, the, † 1861. His Principal Speeches and Addresses (with Portrait) 1 v.

Pryce, Richard. Miss Maxwell's Affections 1 v. — The Quiet Mrs. Fleming 1 v. — Time and the Woman 1 v.

Pym, H. N.: *vide* Caroline Fox. Quiller-Couch, A. T. ("Q").

Noughts and Crosses 1 v. — I Saw Three Ships 1 v. — Dead Man's Rock 1 v. — Ia and other Tales 1 v. — The Ship of Stars 1 v. — The Adventures of Harry Revel 1 v. — Fort Amity 1 v. — Shakespeare's Christmas, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Mayor of Troy 1 v. — Merry-Garden, and Other Stories 1 v.

Quincey: *vide* De Quincey.

Rae, W. Fraser, † 1905. Westward by Rail 1 v. — Miss Bayle's Romance 2 v. — The Business of Travel 1 v.

Raimond, C. E. (Miss Robins) (Am.).

The Open Question 2 v. — The Magnetic North 2 v. — A Dark Lantern 2 v. — The Convert 2 v. — The Florentine Frame 1 v.

"Rajah's Heir, the," Author of. The Rajah's Heir 2 v.

Reade, Charles, † 1884. "It is never too late to mend" 2 v. — "Love me little, love me long" 1 v. — The Cloister and the Hearth 2 v. — Hard

Cash 3 v. — Put Yourself in his Place 2 v. — A Terrible Temptation 2 v. — Peg Woffington 1 v. — Christie Johnstone 1 v. — A Simpleton 2 v. — The Wandering Heir 1 v. — A Woman-Hater 2 v. — Readiana 1 v. — Singleheart and Doubleface 1 v.

"Recommended to Mercy," Author of (Mrs. Houston). "Recommended to Mercy" 2 v. — Zoe's "Brand" 2 v.

Reeves, Mrs.: *v.* Helen Mathers. Rhys, Grace.

Mary Dominic 1 v. — The Wooing of Sheila 1 v.

Rice, James: *v.* Walter Besant. Richards, Alfred Bate, † 1876. So very Human 3 v.

Richardson, S., † 1761. Clarissa Harlowe 4 v.

Riddell, Mrs. (F. G. Trafford). George Geith of Fen Court 2 v. — Maxwell Drewitt 2 v. — The Race for Wealth 2 v. — Far above Rubies 2 v. — The Earl's Promise 2 v. — Mortomley's Estate 2 v.

Ridge, W. Pett. Name of Garland 1 v. "Rita."

Souls 1 v. — The Jesters 1 v. — The Masqueraders 2 v. — Queer Lady Judas 2 v. — Prince Charming 1 v. — The Pointing Finger 1 v. — A Man of no Importance 1 v. — The Millionaire Girl, and Other Stories 1 v. — The House called Hurryish 1 v. — Calvary 2 v. — That is to say— 1 v.

Ritchie, Mrs. Anne Thackeray: *vide* Miss Thackeray.

Roberts, Miss: *vide* Author of "Mademoiselle Mori."

Robertson, Rev. F. W., † 1853. Sermons 4 v.

Robins, Miss: *vide* Raimond. Robinson, F.: *v.* "No Church."

Roosevelt, Theodore (Am.). Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter (with Portrait) 1 v.

Ross, Charles H. The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London Romance 2 v.

Ross, Martin: *vide* Somerville. Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, † 1882. Poems 1 v. — Ballads and Sonnets 1 v.

"Roy Tellet."

The Outcasts 1 v. — **A Draught of Lethe** 1 v. — **Pastor and Prelate** 2 v.

Ruffini, J., † 1881.

Lavinia 2 v. — **Doctor Antonio** 1 v. — **Lorenzo Benoni** 1 v. — **Vincenzo** 2 v. — **A Quiet Nook in the Jura** 1 v. — **The Paragreens on a Visit to Paris** 1 v. — **Carlino, and other Stories** 1 v.

Ruskin, John, * 1819, † 1900.

Sesame and Lilies 1 v. — **The Stones of Venice** (with Illustrations) 2 v. — **Unto this Last and Munera Pulveris** 1 v. — **The Seven Lamps of Architecture** (with 14 Illustrations) 1 v. — **Mornings in Florence** 1 v. — **St. Mark's Rest** 1 v.

Russell, W. Clark.

A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — **The "Lady Maud"** 2 v. — **A Sea Queen** 2 v.

Russell, George W. E.

Collections and Recollections. By One who has kept a Diary 2 v. — **A Londoner's Log-Book** 1 v.

Sala, George Augustus, † 1895.

The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.

Saunders, John.

Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — **The Shipowner's Daughter** 2 v. — **A Noble Wife** 2 v.

Saunders, Katherine (Mrs. Cooper).

Joan Merryweather, and other Tales 1 v. — **Gideon's Rock, and other Tales** 1 v. — **The High Mills** 2 v. — **Sebastian** 1 v.

Savage, Richard Henry (Am.), † 1903.

My Official Wife 1 v. — **The Little Lady of Lagunitas** (with Portrait) 2 v. — **Prince Schamyl's Wooing** 1 v. — **The Masked Venus** 2 v. — **Delilah of Harlem** 2 v. — **The Anarchist** 2 v. — **A Daughter of Judas** 1 v. — **In the Old Chateau** 1 v. — **Miss Devereux of the Mariquita** 2 v. — **Checked Through** 2 v. — **A Modern Corsair** 2 v. — **In the Swim** 2 v. — **The White Lady of Khamnavatka** 2 v. — **In the House of His Friends** 2 v. — **The Mystery of a Shipyard** 2 v. — **A Monte Cristo in Khaki** 1 v.

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Scott, Sir Walter, † 1832.

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Seeley, Prof. J. R., † 1895.

Life and Times of Stein (with a Portrait of Stein) 4 v. — **The Expansion of England** 1 v. — **Goethe** 1 v.

Sewell, Elizabeth, † 1906.

Amy Herbert 2 v. — **Ursula** 2 v. — **A Glimpse of the World** 2 v. — **The Journal of a Home Life** 2 v. — **After Life** 2 v. — **The Experience of Life** 2 v.

Shakespeare, William, † 1616.

Plays and Poems (with Portrait) (*Second Edition*) 7 v. — **Doubtful Plays** 1 v.

Shakespeare's Plays may also be had in 37 numbers, at £0.30. each number.

Sharp, William, † 1905; v. Miss

Howard, Fiona Macleod and Swinburne.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, † 1822.

A Selection from his Poems 1 v.

Sheppard, Nathan (Am.), † 1888.

Shut up in Paris 1 v.

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, † 1816.

The Dramatic Works 1 v.

Shorthouse, J. Henry.

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Sidgwick, Mrs. Alfred.

The Lantern Bearers 1 v.

Slatin Pasha, Rudolf C., C.B.

Fire and Sword in the Sudan (with two Maps in Colours) 3 v.

Smedley, F. E.: *vide* Author of "Frank Fairleigh."

Smollett, Tobias, † 1771.

Roderick Random 1 v. — **Humphry Clinker** 1 v. — **Peregrine Pickle** 2 v.

"Society in London," Author of.

Society in London. By a Foreign Resident 1 v.

Somerville, E. C.E., & Martin Ross.

Naboth's Vineyard 1 v. — **All on the Irish Shore** 1 v.

- "Spanish Brothers, the,"** Author of.
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Stanhope, Earl (Lord Mahon),
 † 1875.
 The History of England 7 v. — Reign of Queen Anne 2 v.
Stanton, Theodore (Am.).
 A Manual of American Literature 1 v.
Steel, Flora Annie.
 The Hosts of the Lord 2 v. — In the Guardianship of God 1 v.
Stevens, G. W., † 1900.
 From Capetown to Ladysmith 1 v.
Sterne, Laurence, † 1768.
 Tristram Shandy 1 v. — A Sentimental Journey (with Portrait) 1 v.
Stevenson, Robert Louis, † 1894.
 Treasure Island 1 v. — Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and An Inland Voyage 1 v. — Kidnapped 1 v. — The Black Arrow 1 v. — The Master of Ballantrae 1 v. — The Merry Men, etc. 1 v. — Across the Plains, etc. 1 v. — Island Nights' Entertainments 1 v. — Catriona 1 v. — Weir of Hermiston 1 v. — St. Ives 2 v. — In the South Seas 2 v. — Tales and Fantasies 1 v.
"Still Waters," Author of (Mrs. Paul).
 Still Waters 1 v. — Dorothy 1 v. — De Cressy 1 v. — Uncle Ralph 1 v. — Maiden Sisters 1 v. — Martha Brown 1 v. — Vanessa 1 v.
Stirling, M. C.: *vide* G. M. Craik.
Stockton, Frank R. (Am.), † 1902.
 The House of Martha 1 v.
"Story of a Penitent Soul, the," Author of.
 The Story of a Penitent Soul 1 v.
"Story of Elizabeth, the," Author of: *vide* Miss Thackeray.
Stowe, Mrs. Harriet Beecher (Am.), † 1896.
 Uncle Tom's Cabin (with Portrait) 2 v. — A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin 2 v. — Dred 2 v. — The Minister's Wooing 1 v. — Old-town Folks 2 v.
"Sunbeam Stories," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Mackarness.
Swift, Jonathan (Dean Swift),
 † 1745.
 Gulliver's Travels 1 v.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles,**
 † 1900.
 Atalanta in Calydon: and Lyrical Poems (edited, with an Introduction, by William Sharp) 1 v. — Love's Cross-Currents 1 v. — Chastelard and Mary Stuart 1 v.
Symonds, John Addington,
 † 1893.
 Sketches in Italy 1 v. — New Italian Sketches 1 v.
Tallentyre, S. G.: *v.* H. S. Merri-man.
Tasma.
 Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill 2 v.
Tautphoeus, Baroness, † 1893.
 Cyrilla 2 v. — The Initials 2 v. — Quits 2 v. — At Odds 2 v.
Taylor, Col. Meadows, † 1876.
 Tara; a Mahratta Tale 3 v.
Templeton: *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."
Tennyson, Alfred (Lord), † 1892.
 Poetical Works 8 v. — Queen Mary 1 v. — Harold 1 v. — Becket; The Cup; The Falcon 1 v. — Locksley Hall, sixty Years after; The Promise of May; Tiresias and other Poems 1 v. — A Memoir. By His Son (with Portrait) 4 v.
Testament, the New: *vide* New.
Thackeray, William Makepeace, † 1863.
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- The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (with Portrait) 4 v. — Selections from the Writings of Lord Macaulay 2 v. — The American Revolution (with a Map) 2 v.
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- Trollope, Anthony, † 1882.**
- Doctor Thorne 2 v. — The Bertrams 2 v. — The Warden 1 v. — Barchester Towers 2 v. — Castle Richmond 2 v. — The West Indies 1 v. — Framley Parsonage 2 v. — North America 3 v. — Orley Farm 3 v. — Rachel Ray 2 v. — The Small House at Allington 3 v. — Can you forgive her? 3 v. — The Belton Estate 2 v. — Nina Balatka 1 v. — The Last Chronicle of Barset 3 v. — The Claverings 2 v. — Phineas Finn 3 v. — He knew he was right 3 v. — The Vicar of Bullhampton 2 v. — Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite 1 v. — Ralph the Heir 2 v. — The Golden Lion of Granpere 1 v. — Australia and New Zealand 3 v. — Lady Anna 2 v. — Harry Heathcote of Gangolli 1 v. — The Way we live now 4 v. — The Prime Minister 4 v. — The American Senator 3 v. — South Africa 2 v. — Is He Popenjoy? 3 v. — An Eye for an Eye 1 v. — John Caldigate 3 v. — Cousin Henry 1 v. — The Duke's Children 3 v. — Dr. Wortle's School 1 v. — Ayala's Angel 3 v. — The Fixed Period 1 v. — Marion Fay 2 v. — Kept in the Dark 1 v. — Frau Frohmann, and other Stories 1 v. — Alice Dugdale, and other Stories 1 v. — La Mère Bauche, and other Stories 1 v. — The Mistletoe Bough, and other Stories 1 v. — An Autobiography 1 v. — An Old Man's Love 1 v.
- Trollope, T. Adolphus, † 1892.**
- The Garstangs of Garstang Grange 2 v. — A Siren 2 v.
- Trowbridge, W. R. H.**
- The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth 1 v. — A Girl of the Multitude 1 v. — That Little Marquis of Brandenburg 1 v. — A Dazzling Reprobate 1 v.
- Twain, Mark (Samuel L. Clemens) (Am.), † 1910.**
- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1 v. — The Innocents Abroad; or, The New Pilgrims' Progress 2 v. — A Tramp Abroad 2 v. — "Roughing it" 1 v. — The Innocents at Home 1 v. — The Prince and the Pauper 2 v. — The Stolen White Elephant, etc. 1 v. — Life on the Mississippi 2 v. — Sketches (with Portrait) 1 v. — Huckleberry Finn 2 v. — Selections from American Humour 1 v. — A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur 2 v. — The American Claimant 1 v. — The £ 1000000 Bank-Note and other new Stories 1 v. — Tom Sawyer Abroad 1 v. — Pudd'nhead Wilson 1 v. — Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc 2 v. — Tom Sawyer, Detective, and other Tales 1 v. — More Tramps Abroad 2 v. — The Man that corrupted Hadleyburg, etc. 2 v. — A Double-Barrelled Detective Story, etc. 1 v. — The \$30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories 1 v. — Christian Science 1 v. — Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven & Is Shakespeare Dead? 1 v.
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Warner, Susan vide: Wetherell.

Warren, Samuel, † 1877.

Diary of a late Physician 2 v. — Ten Thousand a-Year 3 v. — Now and Then 1 v. — The Lily and the Bee 1 v.

"Waterdale Neighbours, the,"

Author of: *v.* Justin McCarthy.

Watts-Dunton, Theodore.

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Westbury, Hugh.

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Wetherell, Elizabeth (Susan

Warner) (Am.), † 1885.

The wide, wide World 1 v. — Queechy 2 v. — The Hills of the Shatemuc 2 v. — Say and Seal 2 v. — The Old Helmet 2 v.

Weyman, Stanley J.

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"Who Breaks—Pays," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Jenkin.

Whyte Melville, George J.:
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Wiggin, Kate Douglas (Am.).
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Wilde, Oscar, † 1900.

The Picture of Dorian Gray 1 v. — De Profundis and The Ballad of Reading Gaol 1 v. — A House of Pomegranates 1 v. — Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, and Other Prose Pieces 1 v. — Lady Windermere's Fan 1 v. — An Ideal Husband 1 v. — Salome 1 v. — The Happy Prince, and Other Tales 1 v. — A Woman of No Importance 1 v. — The Importance of Being Earnest 1 v.

Wilkins, Mary E. (Am.).

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Williamson, C. N. & A. M. (Am.).

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Winter, Mrs. J. S.

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Wood, Charles: *vide* Author of
"Buried Alone."

Wood, H. F.

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Wood, Mrs. Henry (Johnny
Ludlow), † 1887.

East Lynne 3 v. — The Channings 2 v. — Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles 2 v. — Verner's Pride 3 v. — The Shadow of Ashlydyat 3 v. — Trevlyn Hold 2 v. — Lord Oakburn's Daughters 2 v. — Oswald Cray 2 v. — Mildred Arkell 2 v. — St. Martin's Eve 2 v. — Elster's Folly 2 v. — Lady Adelaide's Oath 2 v. — Orville College 1 v. — A Life's Secret 1 v. — The Red Court Farm 2 v. — Anne Hereford 2 v. — Roland Yorke 2 v. — George Canterbury's Will 2 v. — Bessy Rane 2 v. — Dene Hollow 2 v. — The Foggy Night at Offord; Martyn Ware's Temptation; The Night-Walk over the Mill Stream 1 v. — Within the Maze 2 v. — The Master of Greylands 2 v. — Johnny Ludlow 2 v. — In the Twilight 2 v. — Adam Grainger 1 v. — Edina 2 v. — Pomeroy Abbey 2 v. — Court Netherleigh 2 v. — (The following by Johnny Ludlow): Lost in the Post, and

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Wordsworth, William, † 1850.

Select Poetical Works 2 v.

Wraxall, Lascelles, † 1865.

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Yates, Edmund, † 1894.

Land at Last 2 v. — Broken to Harness 2 v. — The Forlorn Hope 2 v. — Black Sheep 2 v. — The Rock Ahead 2 v. — Wrecked in Port 2 v. — Dr. Wainwright's Patient 2 v. — Nobody's Fortune 2 v. — Castaway 2 v. — A Waiting Race 2 v. — The yellow Flag 2 v. — The Impending Sword 2 v. — Two, by Tricks 1 v. — A Silent Witness 2 v. — Recollections and Experiences 2 v.

Yeats: *vide* Levett-Yeats.

Yonge, Charlotte M., † 1901.

The Heir of Redclyffe 2 v. — Heartsease 2 v. — The Daisy Chain 2 v. — Dynevor Terrace 2 v. — Hopes and Fears 2 v. — The Young Step-Mother 2 v. — The Trial 2 v. — The Clever Woman of the Family 2 v. — The Dove in the Eagle's Nest 2 v. — The Danvers Papers; The Prince and the Page 1 v. — The Chaplet of Pearls 2 v. — The two Guardians 1 v. — The Caged Lion 2 v. — The Pillars of the House 5 v. — Lady Hester 1 v. — My Young Alcides 2 v. — The Three Brides 2 v. — Woman-kind 2 v. — Magnum Bonum 2 v. — Love and Life 1 v. — Unknown to History 2 v. — Stray Pearls (with Portrait) 2 v. — The Armourer's Prentices 2 v. — The Two Sides of the Shield 2 v. — Nuttie's Father 2 v. — Beechcroft at Rockstone 2 v. — A Reputed Changeling 2 v. — Two Pennyless Princesses 1 v. — That Stick 1 v. — Grisly Grisell 1 v. — The Long Vacation 2 v. — Modern Broods 1 v.

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